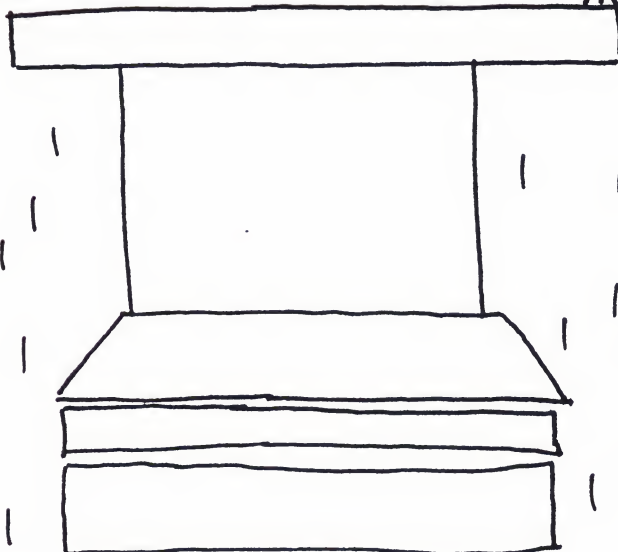
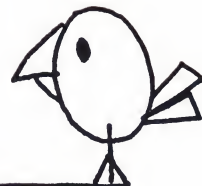


RUDY RUCKER INTERVIEW
COMIX! ACE BACKWORDS
DENNIS WORDEN + OTHERS
BRAIN TOYS + WEIRD STUFF



WHY YOU MUST SUBSCRIBE

Our galaxy, the friendly Milky Way, has drifted into a high-entropy area of the universe. Results have been disastrous: car engines seizing, disk drives crashing, plans going awry, hammers falling squarely on thumbs.

Humans, well known for their powerful ability to consume order and excrete entropy by the boatload, have been spurred on by this hideous spacetime glitch to double and treble their rate of plunderous devastation. Other earth animals and even plants are following suit. Reports of tree branches crashing through car windows have become commonplace. Moth larvae are eating the shirts right off the backs of people everywhere. Beavers are destroying the world's waterways.

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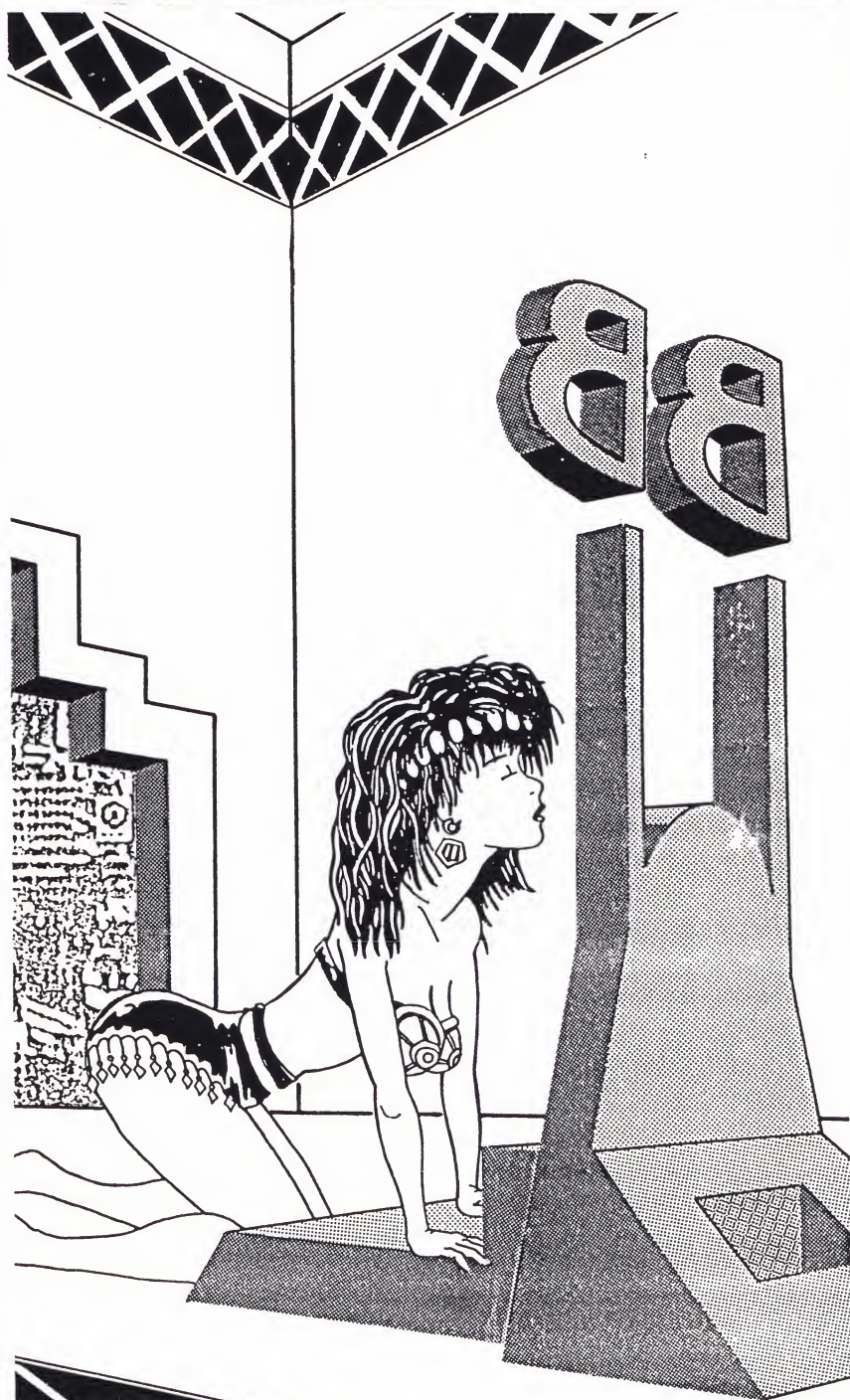
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MARK FRAUENFELDER 1989

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volume 1, issue 3
sometime in 1990

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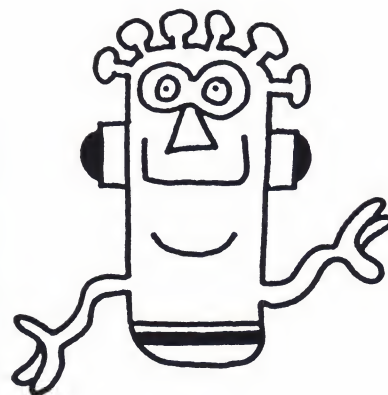
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BOING!



Welcome to our spring issue! Let's put on the boING-boING blinders, ignore the creepy outside world, and crawl *inside* our brains for some good old hedonistic wallowing. Our faithful boING-boING staffers have put together a fantastic hunk of fun reading. Every word and picture is guaranteed to amuse and enlighten, *or your stupidity will be cheerfully refunded.*

Approximately one ounce out of every ton of letters we receive weekly is about boING-boING's cover price. This weak and cowardly minority of readers has complained that *three dollars* is too much to pay for 30 or so pages of non-stop wonderment. The following scientific study comparing the value of boING-boING with the mainstream magazine TIME ought to clear this matter up pronto.

1) TIME costs about \$1.50 and has about 75 pages, minus 35 pages of hideous advertising. That's 3.75 cents per page. boING-boING costs \$3 and has 36 pages, 4 of which contain delightful ads offering useful merchandise. That's 9.4 cents

per page. This clearly demonstrates that TIME is cheap and common.

2) TIME's subject matter is boring. In a recent experiment performed at boING-boING Laboratories, Inc., the twelve survivors of a fifty-person experiment given the choice between suicide and reading an entire issue of TIME said that the brain-numbing experience would haunt them for the rest of their lives. boING-boING, on the other hand, is *just plain fascinating.* From the instant you lay eyes on it, you get happy and stay that way as long as you continue to hold it in your hands. In fact, many people buy multiple copies of boING-boING and sew them into the linings of their jackets, or put them in the trunks of their cars in order to "grok the glow" which boING-boING emits.

There you have it. boING-boING is the clear winner! And since you bought a copy, consider yourself a winner too!

Enjoy!

MARK

boING-boING issue No. 3, volume 1. Sometime in 1990. Published four times per solar year. PO Box 12311 Boulder, CO 80303 USA. Single copy price \$3.00 domestic, \$5.00 (U.S. funds only) international & beyond. 4 issue subscriptions \$10 domestic, \$15 international & beyond. Unsolicited submissions are welcome, but please enclose a SASE for return of material. Copyright © 1990 by respective authors. All rights reserved. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons and institutions in boING-boING and anything in the real world is intended (except for satirical purposes) and any alleged similarity is either coincidence, Jungian synchronicity or the result of your own paranoid delusion. Big deal, see you in Disneyland.



BOUNCING BACK

Hiya Mark:

#1: I owe Mr. Wilson a lot, but it sounds like he's getting old ... I heard a bit of dogmatism and was surprised at the lack of familiarity with Gunderloy. Ah well...

Book reviews are useful, likewise zines... but I believe 'IQ' can be increased, most rapidly by assimilating 'irreconcilable' bits of info... the fringes of the left and the right, advocating liberty in a demobcratic world... yadda yadda. Incest is less surprising than exogamy.

Hammill was definitely worth the price of the book to me... more?

Newsbriefs can be very useful if not too recycled. Comics weren't very helpful to me... bad attitudes are luxuries these days. Nice layout!

Thanks... I hope to contribute more than critiques some day, but sleep-deprivation is Lord right now... best wishes, and thanks for your efforts!

John Dowdell
San Francisco, CA

Dear Editor:

Hey, D.M. Kaufman sent me. She loaned me your mag and suggested I send you a line. I was especially interested in the little note about lucid dreaming which I've been experiencing or practicing since it was mentioned in one of those Don Juan books. One morning, or rather as I approached one morning from the dream world, I was sitting in a living room reading a newspaper. I was most conscious of my hands holding the edges and a general comfort of the surroundings. Much of the print was unintelligible, circles, dots, math problems all in different colors. But one article was from my brother to me. He was telling me all the normal things you might hear from your brother if you were dreaming and he'd written to you through the local dream paper: I love you, I miss you, we'll never be little again will we. Y'now stuff like that. I could feel it was time to get up, very aware of the two bodies - one lying there and the other in a comfy chair. I tried to bring the paper with me to my bed, I

tried to hold it in my hands while I crossed between here and there. I tried to cross very slowly, to move into the hard body carefully so's not to disturb the newspaper, but darn it, it just wouldn't come through. I tried over and over passing freely from here to there finally giving up for another day. I haven't had trouble bringing things in, it's getting'm out that's resistant.

Ralph Sciarappa
New Orleans, LA

(Reading a borrowed copy of bOING-bOING prevents you from truly understanding anything. You must purchase a copy before you can "get it." - editor)

bOING-bOING demands that its readers write back. Tell us what you think of our fine publication! If you like bOING-bOING and write to let us know, you may win! (I don't know who might award you with a prize, but it's within the realm of possibility.) If you don't like bOING-bOING, write anyway, we promise your death will be quick and nearly painless. •

RUDY RUCKER

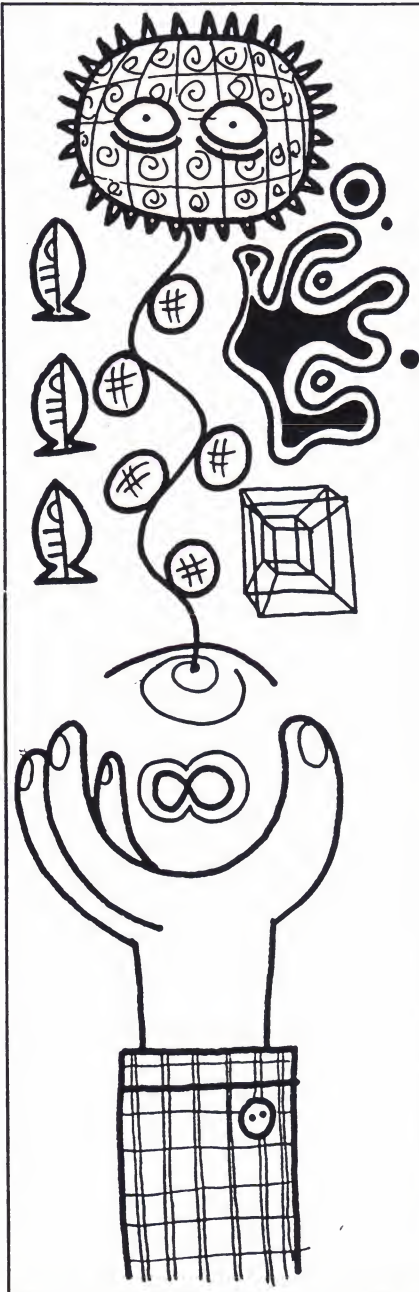
BOING-BOING'S EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW •

*Rudy Rucker is the author of the novels **White Light**, **Spacetime Donuts**, **The Secret of Life**, **The Sex Sphere**, **Software**, **Wetware**, **Master of Space and Time**, and the non-fiction books **Infinity and the Mind**, **The Fourth Dimension**, and **Mind Tools**. He is also a teacher at San Jose State University. In addition he works for Autodesk, where he wrote a cellular automata program called **CA LAB** (see review in **boING-boING** #2). He recently co-edited (along with Robert Anton Wilson and Peter Lamborn Wilson) the **Semiotext(e) Science Fiction Anthology**. **boING-boING** caught him on the phone for this quick interview, botched the taping, guessed at Rucker's answers, and sent the guy the answers for emendation.*

BB: What do you think of Edward Fredkin's theory that the universe is a computer, and that the most basic component is a discrete bit of information?

RUCKER: In the past when people said the universe was a computer, that sounded boring or paranoid like the FBI was keeping a file on you or something. But Fredkin's ideas about the universe don't involve one big computer. It's more like a lot of smaller computers running in parallel. The small computers are CAs - cellular automata.

Fredkin believes literally that the universe is a CA. You can think of it that way, but you can also think of the universe in other ways: in



Interviewed by Mark Frauenfelder

terms of curved space, or infinity. Now I'm past CAs, and I believe in Chaos.

BB: Do we have a chance of discovering the Algorithm under which the universe operates?

RUCKER: Yes it is entirely possible that the Algorithm is as simple as the number 23. But proving it's *really* 23 is quite impossible.

BB: What are you doing at Autodesk?

RUCKER: I'm their Mathenaut. Chuck Yeager man, the Right Stuff. Try this, try that. Last year I did **CA Lab** and now I'm doing **James Gleik's Chaos: The Software**.

BB: Will it have a Lorenz Attractor in it?

RUCKER: Yeah it's got a great 3-D Lorenz Attractor in it and primo fractal tools.

BB: Have you played with **Fractools**? (see review in this issue of **boING-boING**)

RUCKER: Yes, the author of **Fractools** and I took a summer extension class together taught by H.O. Feitgen himself. **Fractools** is a good program, but **Gleik's Chaos software** is a lot better. It's really great (laughs).

BB: Are you still instructing at San Jose State?

Rucker: I'm teaching two classes there: C programming and computer graphics. That's a halftime load at State.

BB: When is your next science fiction book going to come out?

RUCKER: I finished one last summer called **The Hollow Earth**. It's about a guy who hooks up with Edgar Allan Poe and they go to the South Pole and enter a hole that leads to the inside of our earth which is hollow. Inside the hollow Earth it is bright because great light streams flow from a central singularity to the inner Htraean surface. I got the idea with Michael Blumlein at a store called Star Magic. A "plasma sphere."

BB: Have you played around with any virtual reality stuff?

RUCKER: Yeah, Autodesk has been doing work with virtual reality. They had a racquetball simulation, it was kind of neat. The idea about virtual reality is more interesting than the current implementation of it. The graphics have to be pretty clunky to keep up with the user's head panning. A really good computer game is a virtual reality. The goggles are just screens and the dataglove isn't much different from a joystick. But it is interesting because most of the time you think of computers as being precise instruments, but with VR, when you reach for a ball floating in the air, you'll miss and fumble around.

BB: What limitations does Godel's Incompleteness Theory place upon the potential for computers to think like people?

RUCKER: It doesn't rule out that machines can think like people. We can create intelligent machines indirectly, by making ones that evolve.

BB: Sort of like the robots in your P.K. Dick Award novels **Software & Wetware**. The boppers. They're built with a mutation factor so they

can make mutant replicas of themselves.

RUCKER: Yeah. If we can create machines that we can't understand fully, then they may have the capability to think like people. Godel's theorem says that no logical system can churn out all the rules of that system.

The bottom-up theory to artificial life makes more sense to me than the top-down attempts to create artificial intelligence. A few years ago the Artificial Intelligence people were trying to make intelligent systems that appeared to think, like writing a program that emulated a master mechanic. They'd get a real expert and make a database of the things he knew and package it in a menued system. It wasn't artificial intelligence.

The bottom-up approach using cellular automata is so remarkable because of their ability to produce interesting and logically deep patterns on the basis of very simply stated preconditions. A good CA is like an acorn which grows into an oak tree, or more accurately, a good CA is like the DNA inside an acorn, busily orchestrating the protein nanotechnology that builds the tree.

BB: Is it possible to experience the fourth dimension?

RUCKER: I don't know. Every now and then I feel it in an analytical way. And then there's the waking dream of experiencing it directly, which might happen from acid, ecstasy, or a memorable overdose of organic THC. The results are not always reliable.

It's not a particularly pleasant feeling, and it will invade your dreams. ●

FACT sheet

FIVE

A great magazine full of wonderful stuff you shouldn't miss. Hundreds of reviews of small press publications and audio/visual anti-noise are presented in every issue.

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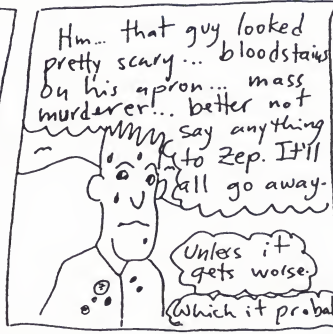
mini story!

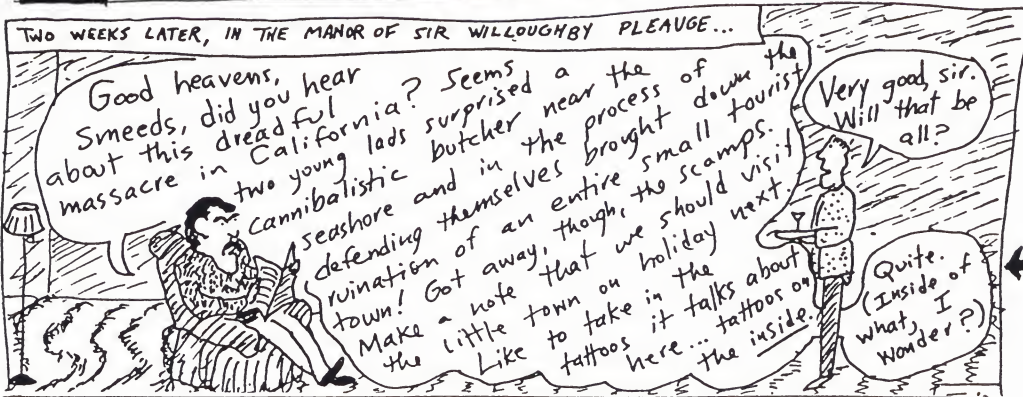
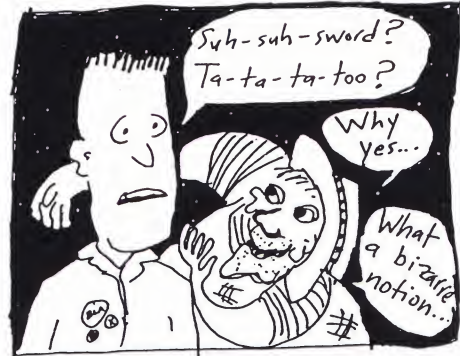
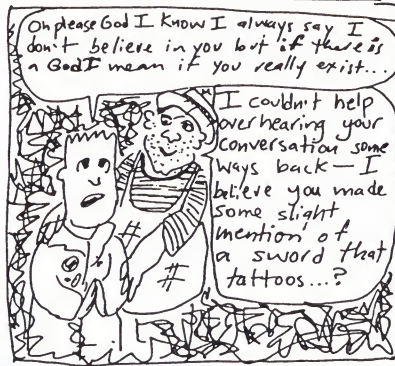
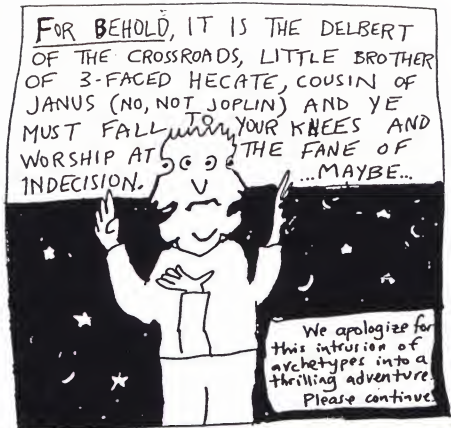
Neil Pickett found seven jars of sawdust in his attic. He called the police and they took them away. He slept well that night, knowing he'd done the right thing. The next morning he found seven jars of sawdust in his refrigerator. This time the police took Neil away. He was sent to prison and assigned sweeping duty in the woodshop. ●

GOING GAGA ARTINFORMATIONNOISE

Here's what people are saying:
"...very...out...touch...material..." -Allan Clark *The Single Eye*
"...visible...load...ideas...boasts..." -Lloyd Dunn *Photostatic*
"...future...attitude...revolution..." -Mike Gunderloy *FF*
"...he more...know...continue..." -Don Baker *Eulipian*
"...brain-pan...steel wool..." -Glenn Grant *Edge Detector*
Fill in the blanks.

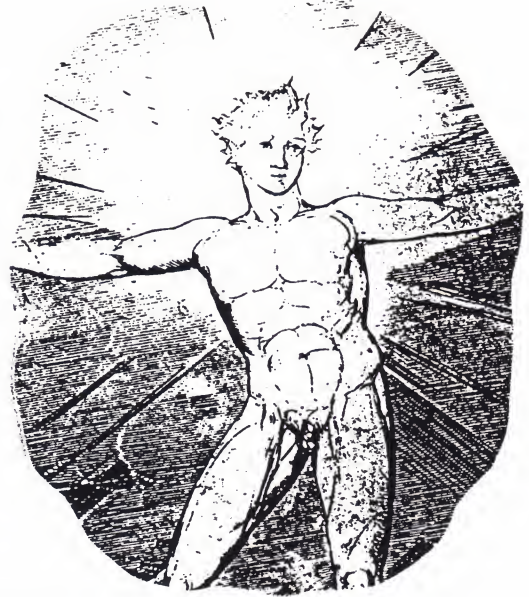
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In reaction to the growing uncertainty of these times, thousands of maps and models (books & teachers) have emerged offering easy exits, secret passageways and other psychological instructions for restoring perspective. As more people pass through these exotic belief systems and metaphysical codes, they will eventually discover how these external guides buffer us from the



NEURO

by Antero Alli



very guidance we are actually seeking inside ourselves. Many such buffers come disguised as still another form of disembodied spirituality wherein we are asked to believe that the source of our knowledge, power and authority lies outside ourselves ... out of body ... as in: channeled entities, crystals, cults, organized religion, UFOs, Mom & Dad, governments, IBM, CBS, FBI, LSD, and so on.

We tend to be multi-dimensional beings who have settled for a lot less. One way to reclaim our power



is in learning how to detect and defuse the human time bomb set to sabotage our autonomy every time we fail to confess our knowledge. Many of us, for instance, would never dream of designing a Tarot Deck. By convincing ourselves of our lack of self-knowledge and "metaphysical expertise", we go out and buy mass-produced decks made by other human beings who dared to lay their souls bare through their self-confessed revelations. Granted, other people's maps are going to be valuable venturing forth into



(absorption), personal interpretation (integration) and communication skills (transmission). As individuals, we awaken to our Central Neural (the word "nervous" gets on my nerves) Systems whenever this trinary circuit of intelligence is realized. One gateway to Intelligence Increase is opened by the prospect of designing a NEURO-TAROT ... a deck of cards expressing how you absorb, integrate and transmit your everyday experience according to the style of your Central Neural System.

TAROT

terra incognita as we're all part of human experience. Yet, how much more specific and enriching would it be to play with a deck of cards custom-designed and tailored to your own personal vision and the internal symbology that is its voice?!

Neuro comes from the Greek "nerve", referring to our most basic unit of biological intelligence: the neuron. The trinary function of the neuron works to absorb, integrate and transmit information and/or energy. Humanistically, it is our capacity for intuitive osmosis



There are several ways to design a NEURO-TAROT depending upon your degree of available energy, artistic talent, and leisure time. For those with an absolute limit of these, you will need many copies of your favorite magazines. (You know ... the ones you read because you just love the subject matter, titles and/or illustrations/photos.) In the service of art, you will mutilate and destroy these by cutting out choice words and images to form the basis of your deck of cards. To complete your NEURO-TAROT Tool Box, you will

also require about fifty 3" by 5" (or 4" by 6") blank index cards, a glue stick, scissors, a dark felt tip pen and scratch paper. (For those of you overflowing with time, energy, and talent ... stay tuned!)

The process of designing an effective personal Tarot rests on your willingness to: completely expose yourself to yourself. Self-honesty ranks far greater than artistic merit here. Sometimes, the best time to design a NEURO-TAROT is when you're in trouble ... Hot Water ... Emotional Catastrophe ... Psychological Disaster ... Personal Shambles ... where you literally feel "in pieces" and would do anything to feel whole again. Your first task is to name the pieces of the puzzle of your broken self or, "broken heart", by assigning a card to each. By defining these fragments, they start availing themselves to you for their creative rearrangement from the Artist Within. If you're not in trouble (and who isn't?!), it's still possible to design a Tarot based in the articulation of your multi-faceted nature. The power of naming initiates our own private language that is the mouth-piece for the Archetypes.

Archetypes are invisible yet powerful forces of nature illuminating personal and racial memory as the mythos, or zeitgeist, of the era. Tarot cards are simply symbolic mirrors reflecting the development of our personal and collective mythologies. Some archetypes are harmonious with each other, while others can only interact in war-like or conflict oriented ways, ie., there are certain individuals we cannot, for the life of us, get along with no matter how hard we try. In this light, we are honest and human to the degree we include the darker, frightening elements of our psyche

along with brighter, more cheerful aspects.

Back to the workbench. Cut out those images in your magazines that trigger an instant resonance in you; positive and negative. You don't even have to know why, at first, just as long as they move you. Place these to your left on the floor or desk in front of you. Then, clip out words and short phrases that speak to you, placing these somewhere over to your right. Look for words that speak your mind, heart and gut reactions.

Start the experiment by bringing together images and words in ways to communicate personal truths ... the way you see the world and/or how you feel about issues. As you continue combining terms and pictures together, look to see which configurations immediately alter the expected ... a new insight into an old fact ... a bird's-eye view on a mundane issue ... a point of view that creates perspective. Look for moments ... condensed visual feasts for the outer and inner eye.

Get your scissors out and start trimming the pictures down so they fit onto the blank index cards and then, glue them on. This is not unlike editing your own movie, passing between freeze-frames to see the story waiting to be told. After cutting and pasting, frame and/or clarify it some more with your dark pen. Don't forget to paste a word on the card, wherever appropriate, to implement the power of naming as discussed earlier. If your card speaks for itself without a name, leave it off. Naming and/or numbering cards is a traditional device for ordering an otherwise random pattern of mixed up cards. You decide what your deck looks like and how much "order" you need to get your

point(s) across. If you wish to extend the lifespan of your deck, contact a printer in your neighborhood that offers lamination services (the plastic cover enveloping restaurant menus) and get your cards covered.

Delineating the phases of transformation one has gone through, is currently traversing and/or would like to explore is nothing short of mapping out your own cosmology according to an internal source of guidance: the first-hand knowledge and confirmation of what is happening to you. When we are ready to confess what is most personal to us, we enter the realm of Self-initiation ... where opportunities abound to where we're at with the issues of our outrageous multi-dimensional nature: Security, Sex, Power, Love, Art, Revelation, Faith, Death, Morality, Education, Money, Magic and ... "the ten-thousand things" ... all of which are latent Tarot Cards disguised as everyday life experiences. (P.S. ... for those readers with an abundance of time, energy, and talent ... what are you waiting for?!)

Antero Alli has designed six original Neuro-Tarot decks and is the author of ANGEL TECH, and other books on mystical realism available through Falcon Press. Write him at: PO BOX 45748, Seattle WA 98145



by Eric Herbert

THE TEN WORST POP SONGS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

James Brown and John Terry wrote and recorded Please, Please, Please in 1956. Cochran and Capehart kicked music-butt with Summertime Blues in 1958. My Generation and Satisfaction both were released in 1965. An excuse for the creation of crummy pop music in the aftermath of these fine examples (all of which were commercially successful) seems non-existent.

These following 10 "pieces" represent extremely low points in pop/rock music's sordid existence. Each one could be theoretically conceived as a nail in the coffin, but that seems a little fatalistic. I'm no alarmist or extremist, just a sober observer.

So that there are no arguments, it should be put forth right here and now that this list is all-Inclusive, and is not just my opinion. It is to be accepted as truth or fact, not to be argued with. Considering all the New Age, political, metaphysical, judicial, religious and socio-fadish shit you pack of sheep swallow, I don't think it's asking too much for you to just go along quietly with this. Disagrees or nay-sayers will be treated with the utmost condescension. Now then, let's get started.

In descending order:

10. Party All the Time (1985/6), *Eddie Murphy*. (It should be noted that Rick James helped make this mess).

If you can forget about his obnoxious and over-emphasized horse-laugh, Mr. Murphy is an extremely funny and seemingly sincere kinda guy. Musical Rant dOes NOT, however, tolerate popular entertainers trying to milk their celebrity status for every nickle it's worth. (Don Johnson

and Pia Zadora, having zero talent to begin with, are laughably excused for their musical catastrophes).

Had Mr. Money made a joke-rap, or self-parodying record, most would be forgiven. Instead, he tried to show that he was a serious singer. There is no excuse. The Good-Taste Gestapo should have their way with him. All future product is to be boycotted.

9. I Am Woman (1972), *Helen Reddy*.

Musical Rant also does not tolerate so-called artists trying shamelessly to glean a career-boost from popular social movements or trends. Clever, subversive or subtle manipulation of the masses is applauded. Blatant money-grubbing is not. Nor is this song. Nor is that porcine-scum Helen Reddy.

8. Kung Fu Fighting (1974), *Carl Douglas*.

See the above tirade. We can only hope that this idiot is now broke and paying for his sins in a Detroit prison following a crack-house bust. What a loser.

7. Silly Love Songs (1976), *Paul "He's got back problems from carrying his wallet" McCartney*.

"You'd think the world would have had enough of silly love songs..." He's right. We have. This putrid project should have been aborted before a single note was wasted on it.

6. Seasons in the Sun (1974), *Terry Jacks*.

Who is this pus-head, and where did he come from? Silly love songs are bad enough, but phony dramatic songs are completely verboten. Wherever monsieur Jaques is today, let us pray that he is suffering. The drivel he created was about as enjoyable as the cancer he immortalized. Loser-city.

5. Stayin' Alive (1977), *The Bee Gees*.

Okay, the song truly isn't that bad. Nonetheless, the entire Disco-Culturpocalypse can be traced back to The Gibb Guys. And this song was their launching pad. Male falsettos are stupid. Period. Pavorotti and Caruso hit the high C's, but they were tenors. There's no need to sing any higher. Franki Valli and The Bronski Beat stand as convincing evidence.

4. Hey Jude (1968), *The Fab Four*.

The beginning of the song is okay. Forget about it. It's just a pleasant little ditty about somebody's kid that's kinda bummed out and the song is supposed to kinda cheer him up. We all know well how that sort of thing works, but that's not the issue here. Halfway through the song, poor Jude is subjected to a millennium of mindless "Nah-nah-nah Nah-nuh-Nuh-nah, etc... ad Infinitum. More than any other, this song made it okay to stretch out a good or bad musical idea longer than would seem humanly tolerable. And people bought the stupid aeon-long-song idea by the truckload. Look at In-A-Gada-Da-Vida. Yikes. Thank the merciful Lord for the Ramones.

3. Layla (1971), *Derek and the Dominos*.

A prime example of the vinyl squandering that followed in the wake of Yo Jude. How long does that piano excess last at the end there. An hour? A lifetime? Might as well. I feel like I'd rather die than listen to the whole thing. The front part of the song is just as offensive. The whining guitar and vocal duo repeats and repeats and repeats. I'm sure that whoever Layla was, she was very flattered by this monstrosity. Poor lass. I'd change my name.

2. Close To You (1971), *The Carpenters*.

If only anorexia were fashionable a decade or so earlier, our collective ears may have been spared this gem. It's screamingly putrid, an embarrassment to God and country. Hal David and Burt Bacharach wrote this turd, and a just society would not have allowed them to roam free. Why do we coddle these artistic invalids?

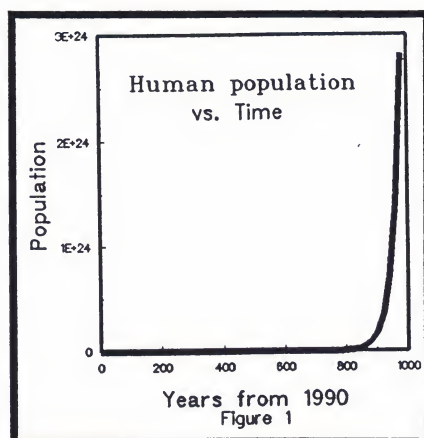
1. Midnight at the Oasis (1973), *Maria Muldaur*.

Were I stuck out in the desert with this crooner, I believe those camels would start looking good. Real good. This song is the absolute pinnacle of wretchedness. Musical Rant recommends repeated high-dosage X-ray treatments in the larynx region for Ms. Muldaur. This would give us some insurance against a possible comeback. Of course, we risk making her a martyr, but that's just one of the chances we take when we deal with artistic justice.

So, those are they. You are encouraged to write back, care of Double Boing and spout your own theories. Musical Rant will gladly show you where you are wrong. ●

Most of humankind's knowledge deals directly or indirectly with how to make life better. Sometimes "better" is for the world at large, more often "better" is for human beings. (And sometimes "better" is for the prejudiced author's favorite tribe of humans.)

Folks are usually happy to accept the standard-issue slice-o-knowledge heaped onto their brain pans, augmenting it with trivial data they pick up from *Entertainment Tonight*, *People Magazine*, *Sports*



up royally and dying penniless, etc).

But without pioneers, global improvements will cease, and all the problems humans have created for Earth will snowball. With luck, this won't happen. The laziest person in the world will get up and move if a red hot poker is applied to his backside. The festering problems of the earth will goad normally complacent people into action when their comfort zones are violated strongly enough. But will we

EARTH NEEDS MUTANT GENII!

BY MARK FRAUENFELDER



Illustrated, *Reader's Digest* etc. They've accepted a safe and complacent life in exchange for virtual lobotomies. They might be aware, in the backs of their brains, that there is more to life than what they already know, but they aren't willing to risk shattering their precious dogmas in order to find out.

It's been said that you can dis-

tinguish pioneers from other people by the arrows in their backs. Most people choose to reap the benefits of tried and true methods of dealing with life's problems rather than being shot by an "arrow" (such as going to jail, being shunned by the society in which they wish so badly to remain, losing one's mind, fucking

act in time? Or are we humans like the proverbial bunch of frogs, who when thrown in a pot of boiling water, will leap out, but if put in a pot of cold water and heated gradually, allow themselves to be hard-boiled to death?

Our current environmental problems call for new thinking. Thinking which is holistic rather than



the face.

big numbers

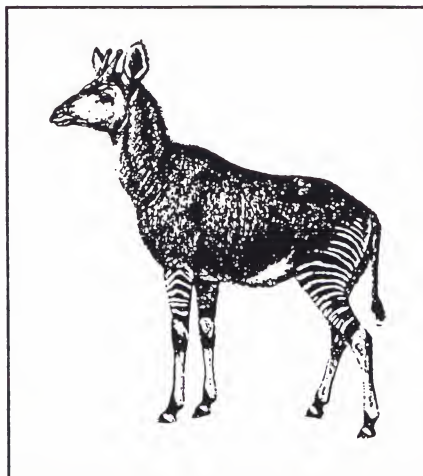
Some say we should just pump money into space programs and fly the coop. The Earth is trashed and it's time to move on to greener planets. I used to agree, and I still would if not for the fact that humans can produce copies of themselves. The Earth's human population doubled from 1970 to 1990. There's no reason to think it will stop, especially when humans move to other planets where food and other resources will encourage population growth.

"Man vs. the Universe" type thinking. When my father was in engineering school twenty-five years ago, a professor told his class that the Earth's atmosphere is infinite for all practical purposes, and therefore we could dump as much planet choking poison into the air as we wanted, without worrying about it. This is just an extension of the frontiersmen attitude in which folks chucked their bags of trash over their shoulders as they moved down the trail, figuring the world was so big that it didn't make a rat's ass of difference.

If you really want to point a finger at somebody, let's point it at the Neanderthals & Cro-Magnons (They're all dead now anyway so they can't refute me) and their kitchen middens. They just kept throwing bones and trash to the back of their cave homes until the stench from the garbage heap was unbearable and then they moved on. It may have worked back when 50,000 or so humans inhabited the entire Earth, but when 5 billion of us are throwing bags of garbage over our shoulders, it is hitting other people, plants and animals in

Scientists currently believe the Universe to be finite. No one knows exactly how many stars with planets are out there, but for the sake of argument, let's say that there are one trillion planets which humans could happily inhabit. Now let's assume that the greatest number of people any planet could possibly support is 20 billion (four times the Earth's current human population). That gives us an equation to work with:

$$(1 \times 10^{12} \text{ planets}) \times (2 \times 10^{10} \text{ people/planet}) = 2 \times 10^{22} \text{ people}$$



So, if you'll please humor me and agree with my assumptions for the time being, we can say that the universe is capable of supporting approximately 20,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 or 20 sextillion people.

Lets also assume that the human population will double every twenty years. Estimates indicate the 1990 human population to be 5 billion. So in 2010 (twenty years) the population will be 10 billion, in 2030 it will be 20 billion, and so on. If this trend continues, humans will reach the universe's support limit in just 920 years (see the graph).

(At this point, the Cro-Magnons reading this will say to themselves "920 years? I'll be dead and gone by that time. Screw it. Let's trash the place." But if you're like me and plan on being around 920 years from now, this estimate is cause for concern.)

As seen above, the problem is not just saving the Earth, it is saving the Universe from the humans' tendency to ravage everything in sight for short-term gain. Some scientists propose that nuclear waste be shot into space. Already



trouble is, most of them are working for the military, developing (as Bucky Fuller pointed out) new ways to kill greater numbers of people with fewer units of energy expenditure. Can't blame these geniuses, they're just going after the bucks. As long as they're getting paid lots of money they aren't going to worry that they've created and supported a system that can vaporize our planet at thirty minute's warning. You can put the blame on those cavemen, who didn't care about messy situations as long as it wasn't

the mind expansion technique of their choice and realize that there isn't an outside and an inside, but instead a single fantastic interdependent system which can correct itself only if it is not knocked too far out of kilter (Gaia seems like a plausible theory, but you can only hurt Her so much before She falls apart). We need intelligent humans who can see the interdependent relationships between Earth's life forms and Her land, water and air. Genii who can predict the long-term results of proposed solutions to immediate problems and act accordingly.

Things are looking good. More people than ever before are aware and concerned with the fate of Earth. With regard to its past environmental policy, the Fed Government is starting to slow down its destructive romp and might even change directions despite its incredible inertial resistance to do otherwise. Mass market celebrity-worship magazines and television shows are jumping on the band-wagon. In this world where the media and government like to find a hot issue and cram it down our media-sucking orifices for six months until we start begging for something different, let's hope that this is one fad that doesn't go away. ●

they want to pollute space before we even have a chance to get there! The problem lies not in finding a way to hide nuclear waste, but in finding ways to produce energy without creating dangerous and deadly substances that are impossible to make vanish.

(The fact that federal spending on research and development of renewable energy sources has been slashed by 84% since 1980 doesn't help.)

The world has plenty of genii. The

in their cave.

We need mutant genii to take action. Mutants who were born without that cave-man gene that makes us trash our planet. Or folks who have learned to mutate themselves through

DEBRA OSTROKOLOWICZ
i l l u s t r a t o r



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LET ME
HEAR YA' SAY
"WOA!"

LET ME HEAR YA' SAY
"GEORGE-BUSH-IS-A-FASCIST-
WEENIE-WHO'S-POLICIES-IN-
CENTRAL-AMERICA-ARE-A-
DISGRACE-TO-THE-AMERICAN-
PUBLIC-IN-GENERAL-AND-THE-
ENTIRE-HUMAN-RACE-IN-
PARTICULAR-WOO-WOO!"

GEORGE
BUSH
WEEEEE
CR...
WOO-ooo.

I BELIEVE A ROCK STAR HAS AN OBLIGATION TO BOTH ENTERTAIN AND ENLIGHTEN HIS AUDIENCE!!



HOW TO CREATE A WARM-YET- WITTY FAMILY- TYPE COMICAL STRIP

IN FOUR
E-Z STEPS

FIRST YOU NEED THE BUMBLING-YET- LOVABLE DAD-TYPE:

GOSH, IT'S SO WONDERFUL
TO BE BACK IN MY
WARM-YET-WITTY HOME.



THEN YOU NEED THE
CAUSTIC-YET-WRYLY-
AMUSING MOM-TYPE:

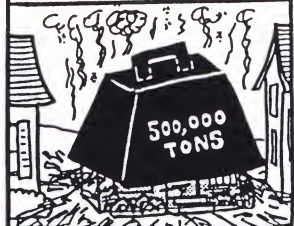
NOW ISN'T THAT
JUST LIKE A MAN.
BUT SERIOUSLY..

AND THEN YOU NEED THE PRECOCIOUS-YET-ADORABLE CHILD-TYPE:

HONESTLY....YOU TWO
ARE A BAD INFLUENCE
ON ME!



AND LASTLY YOU NEED, OF COURSE, THE CRUDE-YET-EFFECTIVE 500,000-TON WEIGHT CRASHING FROM THE SKY AND CRUSHING THE ENTIRE HOUSE-HOLD:



VERY WELL.
HOW MUCH
JUSTICE
ARE YOU
INTERESTED
IN BUYING?



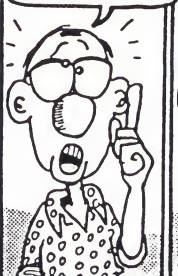
WHAT?!! WUDDAYA MEAN "BUY JUSTICE"? THIS IS AMERICA!!! WHAT'S MONEY GOT TO DO WITH MY RIGHT TO A FAIR TRIAL?!!



LET ME PUT IT THIS WAY, MR. GRUNTMANN... HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHY YOU ALMOST NEVER SEE A RICH PERSON IN PRISON?



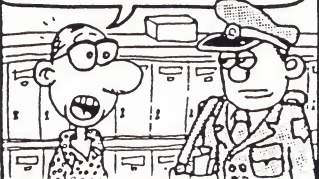
HMMM.....
BECAUSE ONLY
POOR PEOPLE
COMMIT CRIMES?



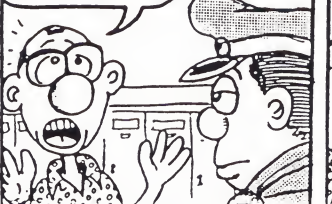
HMM.... "THE \$9,995⁰⁰
COMPLETE-INNOCENCE-
OF-ALL-CHARGES SPECIAL"
SOUNDS INTRIGUING....



I CAN'T FIGGER OUT HOW
COME PEOPLE ALWAYS COMPLAIN
ABOUT THE POSTAL SERVICE!!
YOU ASK ME, IT'S ONE OF THE
FEW GOVERNMENT AGENCIES
THAT ISN'T RIDDLED WITH
INCOMPETENCY AND FRAUD!!



HELL, FOR A MERE 25¢
YOU CAN GET A LETTER HAND-
DELIVERED CLEAR ACROSS THE
COUNTRY IN LIKE 2 DAYS!!
AND YET PEOPLE COMPLAIN!!
HOW COME??

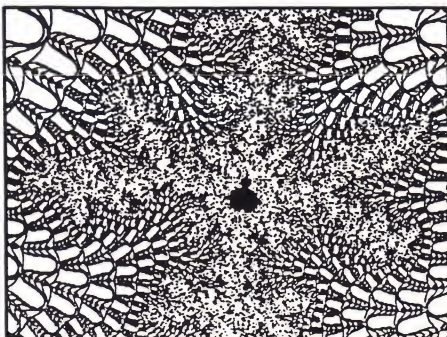
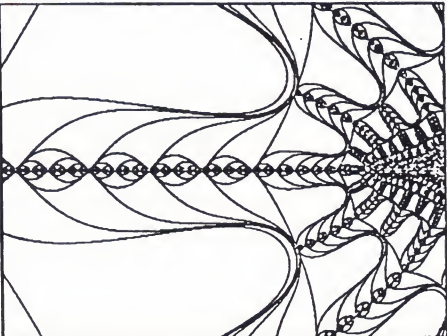
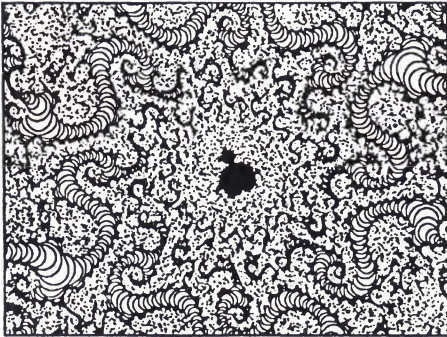
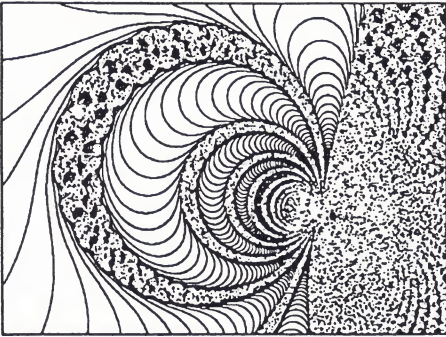


BILLS!! BILLS!!
AND MORE BILLS!!!
% ! @ !! ? * * % * @
LOUSY POSTAL SERVICE!!

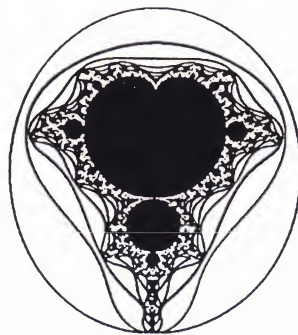


DOES THE PHRASE "KILL-
THE-MESSENGER-WHO-
BRINGS-THE-BAD-NEWS"
RING A BELL??

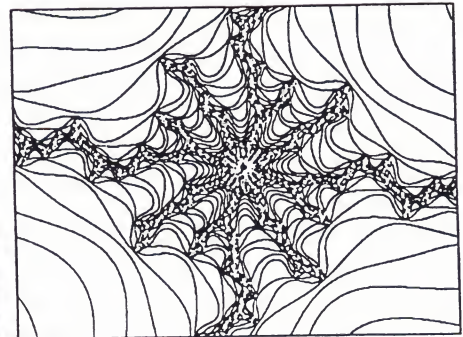
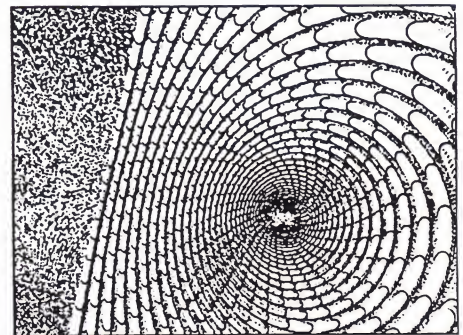
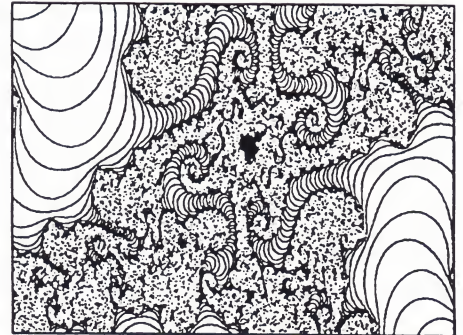
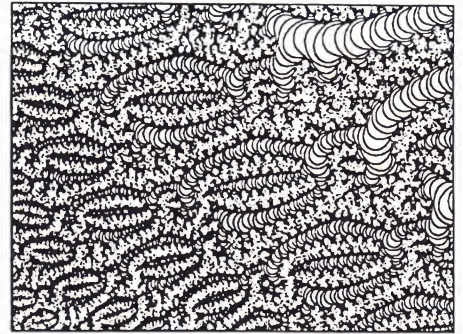




FRACTOOLS



software review
by mark frauenfelder

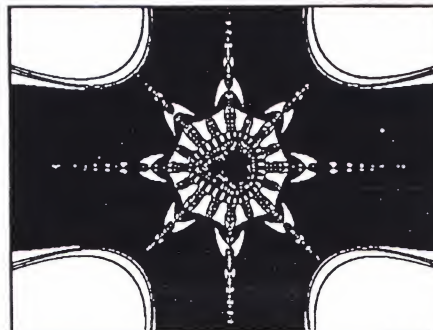
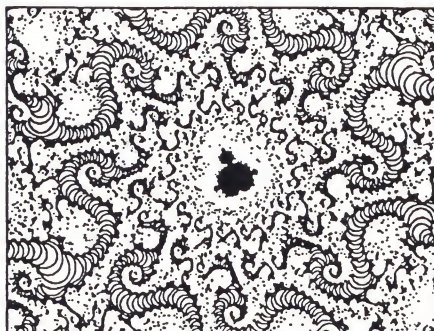
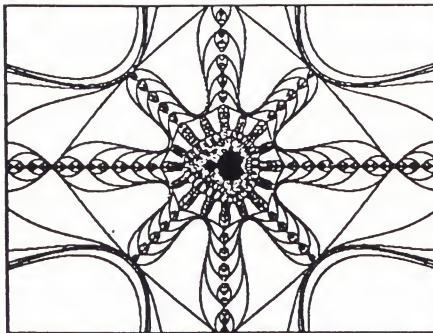
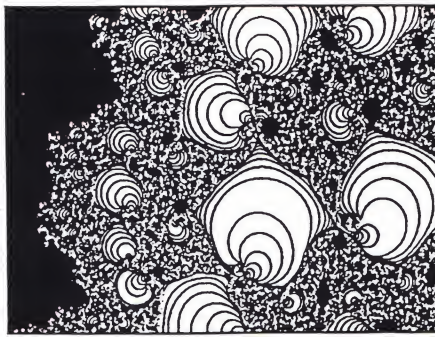


They tell you right away in the manual: "Before discussing 'how' to play with FracTools, we need to emphasize the fact that the only thing you can do with it is play." So? Who wants to work?

The beauty of this program is that payoffs from playing with it are immediate. How *deep* you want to delve into the mysteries of the Mandelbrot set is up to you. You can load up existing images and stare at the swirling patterns, letting drool spill between the cracks of your keyboard. Or you can become an active explorer, discover a previously unknown area, and name it after yourself (nobody will care, but you can do it). Whatever you decide to do with FracTools, it all boils down to the fact that the human brain groks pretty colors and this program makes them.

Fractals have captured the minds and imaginations of people because they are representative of many similar paradigms bouncing around realityville right now: the holographic brain, cellular automata, chaos theory, and artificial intelligence. Plus, they look like really neat tie-dye t-shirt designs.

What in thearnation is a fractal? There are as many definitions of a fractal as there are levels to one. The 'correct' Scientific American-approved description of a fractal was coined by Benoit Mandelbrot (discoverer of the fractal) and goes as follows:

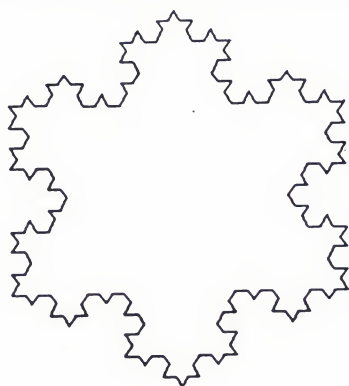
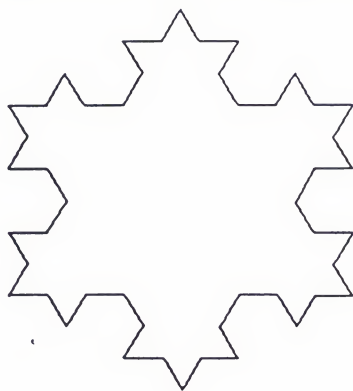


"I conceived and developed a new geometry of nature and implemented its use in a number of diverse fields. It describes many of the irregular shapes and fragmented patterns around us, and leads to full-fledged theories, by identifying a family of shapes I call fractals."

Fractals are entities, shapes, processes or ideas that are both self-similar and have no scale. In other words, the level of detail in a fractal remains constant no matter how much you zoom in on an area. This holds for both zooming in and zooming out. A cloud can be considered a sort of fractal. If you look at a cloud, notice that the puffy bumps protruding from the body of the cloud also sport their own smaller puffy bumps, and these bumps have their own bumples, etc. The interesting thing is that the ratio of the size of the main body of the cloud to the bumps is the same as that of one of the bumps to its bumples. It is virtually impossible to determine the size of a cloud from a photograph.

The fascination buildings such as the Notre Dame hold for the human brain is partly attributable to their lack of scale as well. In contrast to the block-like Bauhaus buildings which offer no new information when you see one up close, the Notre Dame brings new levels of detail into view as you zoom in on it. First you see the overall shape of the building, and as you approach it, pillars and arches come into view. Zooming in on an arch will reveal griffins and statues. Zooming in further, you will find intricate curls and designs cut into the stone.

Coastlines are another example of fractals. A coastline may go from point A to point B, but if it were



Koch Snowflake figure 1.

stretched into a straight line, the line would be infinitely long. Each time you zoom in on a section of coastline, you will discover that it has curves and zigzags of the same scale as larger and smaller sections of coastline. The Koch Snowflake is a good example of a fractal which possess a finite area with an infinite perimeter. (see figures 1&2). But when it comes to downright gee-whizzing your pants off, the winner must be the color representation of the Mandelbrot set. And FracTools is a Mandelbrot churnin' machine.

As the name implies, FracTools is a set of tools to explore the beautiful fractal imagery of the Mandelbrot set. Just playing with the program is going to teach you a lot about the nature of fractals without having to read some uptight egghead book about them. As you zoom in on sections of the Mandelbrot fractal, you'll notice that much of it is composed of smaller copies of itself. It's like a tree composed of tiny trees, which in turn are composed of tinier trees, (reminiscent of the flea on a flea's back poem, by some hash-ish-eating goofball from the days of yore).

With FracTools you start out with

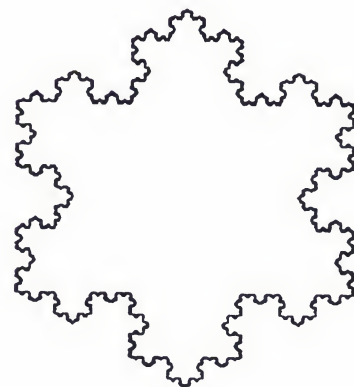
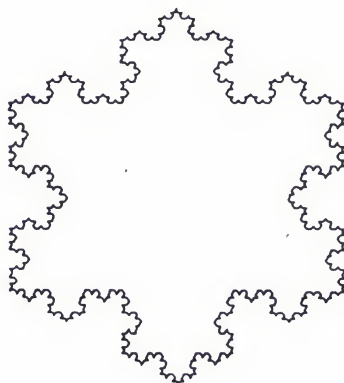
the basic Mandelbrot building block (called a benny, see figure 2). The black-and-white reproductions pictured here don't do the images justice. (If you've never seen a color image of a fractal, check out the June 1989 issue of that topless girly mag called National Geographic.)

Although the basic benny is pretty neat looking as it stands, the purpose of FracTools is to ZOOM, STROBE, and PAN. Pick out a tiny section of the benny that looks interesting, draw a box around it, and zoom the information within the box so that it fills the entire screen. The bad news is that this can take up to 12 hours on a 16 Mhz 386 computer, so have

patience. (It's cranking out 112,000,000 equations to produce the image; let's see you do that overnight, you whining pig-widgeon!) The good news is that the results are worth the wait.

There are several things you can do to an image. The colors can be strobed in sequence or in a random fashion, which gives the illusion of a crawling, beating, organic blob living behind the screen of your monitor. You can make a four-way mirror image of the original and strobe that. You can move the whole image in six directions. Best of all, you can zoom, strobe, pan, and kaleidoscope the image simultaneously.

The images that FracTools generate are large and will eat up disk space. This isn't a problem if you are playing with it at work, because you can just trash your boss's Lotus 1-2-3 files to make room on the hard disk. But if you're at home and you can't bear to peel off your Maxine Headboom show to a floppy, take heart. For FracTools has seen fit to include PK ZIP, a file compression utility, with its package. Gosh, it's enough to give you faith in your fellow ape again. ●



Koch Snowflake figure 2.

BOING-BOING

looks at books

The Happiest Man in the World and Other Stories, by David Arnason, Talonbooks, Vancouver, B.C., Canada, 1989. 163 pages.

Review by Steve Posner

You may ask, Can a middle-aged Canadian speak to the problem of alienation in modern Western society? And well you may! After reading this insightful, appealing collection of very short stories, I would have to answer YES! He sure can speak to them, and in fact, he does a good job of helping an Angry Young Man figure out what's going on around here. Arnason, a fifty-year-old author and English professor in Manitoba, makes effective use of his privileged position outside the heat of the bright lights and nauseating pace of Less Than Zero U.S. urban cultural imperialism to expose social expectations for what we use them: Quiet little bludgeons wielded against the Self by All Other Selves. It's a

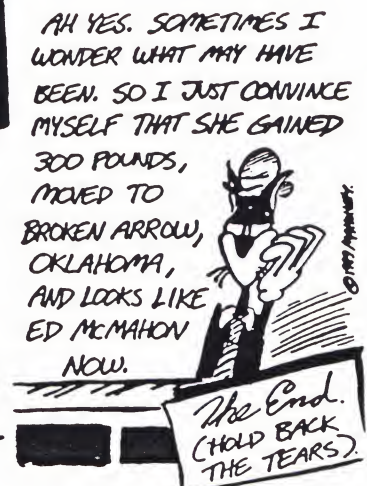
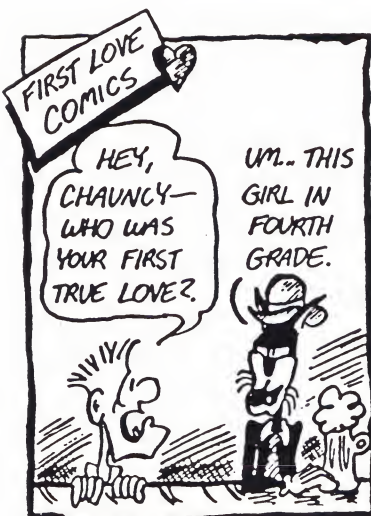
fascinating, quick read, easy to take but powerful in its effect. You can think of many of these stories as light but sharp exposes of the process of social interaction in its most confusing forms: Sexual, community, family and economic.

Arnason demonstrates an amazing repertory of expository skills; this may in fact be the cleverest use of a collection of short stories, since the format allows him to shift gears every few pages and demonstrate a facility with any one of several styles. In the opening piece, **The Unmarried Sister**, he adopts a style evocative of Richard Brautigan, using short, simple sentences and the lexicographic convention of capitalizing his characters' "titles". The reader is forced to recognize these "titles" (The Unmarried Sister, The Younger Sister, The Failing Mother) as examples of social archetypes, and probably can identify friends and acquaintances who fit the description the author provides. There is no plot or resolution; in fact, many of the stories are really set pieces, without any real beginning or resolution, literary Petri dishes rather than environments. In **Girl and Wolf**, he retells the story of **Little Red Riding Hood** (which, as originally told and intended, is itself a rich collection of disturbing metaphor and social commentary), getting increasingly explicit with the sexual symbolism until the story resolves with Wolf losing the Game of Sex to the Girl Woman. Still, implicit in this

"resolution" is that life will now proceed according to rules imposed upon the players, not chosen by them; the reader is left hanging if he or she is awaiting the happy ending.

After the two opening pieces, Arnason's style calms down and becomes a more familiar variety of narrative. The situations become more familiar and recognizable, if not slightly bizarre, allowing the reader to get comfortable. Arnason's ability to soothe the reader—allowing him or her to slip into the story like a comfy old bathrobe—and then make his points with precision twists and jabs, is a rare talent. Most of the stories can be loosely grouped into one of two categories: The suburban slice-of-life narrative or the ethereal reinterpreted fairy tale. But whether it's a fable with a talking fish as its central metaphor or a description of beer with the boys, each piece is precise in its imagery, and the skill the author exhibits in evoking an emotion in order to make a point places him in the company of writers like Saroyan and Steinbeck. His exposition does the talking; and when he does get deliberate in the delivery of dogma, it's worth the words: In a story about his relationship to his daughter, he explains that he loses her trust in an incident in which she has been accused of shoplifting.

"I repeated those charges, adding to them some charges of my own that were



equally false, but even meaner. You don't need to know them."

Anyone who ever righteously accused a friend or relative of doing something that they didn't do knows what's coming: the narrator has to eat a big plate of shit and continue. The narrator is right- the reader doesn't need to know what the other "meaner charges" were; one can fill in the blanks appropriately.

The collection of short stories is varied, amusing and enlightening, and it is the final piece which really makes it stick together. **A Girl's Story** is really worth the price of admission by itself, but at the end it becomes a concise text for a class in **Fiction 101**. Arnason exposes a possible process that he--or any writer--might use to construct a short story, outlining the process of creating a setting and developing characters. The heavyhandedness serves to expose his work as art by trial and error--read *work*--and belies the apparent facility with which he has produced this collection of short stories. It evokes the idea of writing--or, perhaps, art--as a process, not merely inspiration. He is telling you precisely what he's about to do, then does it, and you're *still* impressed. It's like Michael Jordan being guarded by a rookie--Jordan says, "I'm going left, down the middle, and dunk in your neck, and there's nothing on God's green earth that you or anyone on your team can do to stop me." But Arnason is a writer, not a basketball player; so here's what he says:

"The feminists are going to say that I'm perpetuating stereotypes, that by giving the impression the girl is full of passion I'm encouraging rapists. That's crazy. I'm just using a literary convention. Most of the world's great books are about the conflict between reason and passion. If you take that away, what's left to write about?"

A bit later, he explains his attitude toward fiction:

"You may object that this would not have happened in real life, that the conversa-

tion would have been awkward, that Linda would have been a bit frightened by the man. Well, why don't you just run out to the grocery store and buy a bottle of milk and a loaf of bread? The grocer will give you your change without even looking at you. That's what happens in real life, and if that's what you're after, why are you reading a book?"

Seems pretty obvious, and nobody has said it better.



WHAT A LONG STRANGE TRIP IT'S BEEN: A HIPPIY'S HISTORY OF THE 60's AND BEYOND by Lewis Sanders (\$10 + \$1 postage from *Straight From the Hip Press, Inc. P.O. Box 8005, Suite #316, Boulder, CO 80306*)

Review by Mark Frauenfelder

It has been long and strange. In Lewis Sanders' mind, the 60's and its strangeness have been going on for 30 years. And in his mind, most of the strangeness has not been good.

W.A.L.S.T.I.B. starts out with a verse-like narrative of the consciousness expanding

phenomena which took place in the early 60's. But it quickly changes its tune. The rest of the book is about the evil doings of the evil dolts in the FBI, CIA, NSA, DEA and other 3-letter-acronym freedom-squelching organizations.

Everyone already knows that governments of all kinds are devoted solely to further empowering themselves at the expense of the masses. Sanders provides an exhaustive list of specific examples. W.A.L.S.T.I.B is not a happy book, as you might first think upon seeing the psychedelic cover and its reference to hippies.

Sanders delivers some interesting facts, speculation, and analysis of things that happened:

"(Hubert Humphrey once introduced) a bill which would have made it a crime punishable with five years in prison for being a member of the communist party."

"One ploy of the Nixon gang was to create in late 1969 a lottery system for the draft, so that going to war became a big life or death contest, and if you got a high number you won and wouldn't be drafted. And many of those who lucked out and were no longer in danger of being drafted themselves just copped out and ceased their antiwar activities, just as Nixon hoped they would."

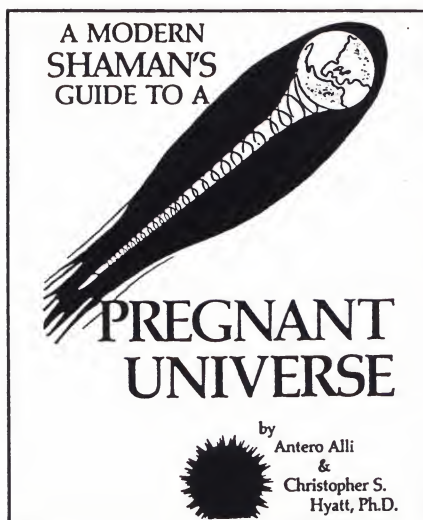
"The assassination of Robert Kennedy was the result of years of research and hard work by the CIA in the area of mind control and behavior modification thru drugs & hypnosis, specifically hypnotically controlled assassins. Sirhan Sirhan was hypnotically programmed to assassinate Robert Kennedy by a Hollywood psychiatrist named William Joseph Bryan, Jr. Bryan worked extensively with the C.I.A and in this case went as far as having Sirhan stay at his ranch for weeks while being programmed. At the time of the killing, he was waiting outside the back door of the Ambassador Hotel in his pick-up truck and horse trailer to be used as the getaway vehicle if necessary. Bryan was also the Hollywood consultant to the

movie "The Manchurian Candidate" about a brainwashed assassin programmed to kill the president. Bryan also bragged of having programmed Arthur Bremer, the assassin who shot and paralyzed right-wing Presidential candidate George Wallace in the 1972 Presidential campaign to once again narrow the field to Richard Nixon."

How much of Sanders' history is Big-Brother-Approved fact and how much is extrapolation? That's a question you have to answer for yourself, since history is all made up anyway. Sanders does annotate his book and provides an extensive bibliography to back up his facts.

After going through 150 plus pages of depressing examples of greed, hatred and stupidity, Sanders ends the book on a hopeful note, declaring that the rebelliousness of the 60's prevented world destruction, and that we must continue to work in that spirit.

The book ends with Sanders' list of "Heroes", "Martyrs", "Villains" and "Self-outs".



Modern Shaman's Guide to a Pregnant Universe by Antero Alli and Christopher Hyatt, Ph.D. (Falcon Press, 1605 E. Charleston Blvd. Las Vegas, Nevada, 89104. Phone (800) LIKE-BOOK)

Review by Mark Frauenfelder

This is a guidebook explaining the drug-like effects of ideas and words, and how to create your own religion. Rather than accepting the local dogmas created hundreds or even thousands of years ago, Pregnant Universe tells you how to scrape the crust of ancient religious bromides from your brain and write your own life script.

Alli and Hyatt are both veteran cyber-shamans and this book offers many thought provoking ideas designed to create action in the reader's brain and body. For example: "A goal of a modern shaman is to learn to generate degrees of consciousness at will. This enables her to learn, combine, recombine and access multiple layers of information."

Each page is loaded with graphics designed to amuse, upset, and encourage thought. One of the funniest parts is the "GOD APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT FORM" which religious deities must fill out before you will consider them to be one of your gods. A sample form filled out by Jesus of Nazareth is included.

Pregnant Universe is written with Timothy Leary's Eight Neurological Circuits theory in mind (see his books Exo-Psychology and Info-Psychology, as well as Robert Anton Wilson's Prometheus Rising for more information about this theory).

Not a new-age Pollyanna diatribe, Pregnant Universe is funny, audacious and at times disturbing. Just the thing to get the old mental cogs turning. •

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Going Ga-Ga (page 5 for price and address)

FUN STUFF!

Dan Quayle: Acid Queen?

Did Danforth Quayle participate in an LSD party at Depauw University in 1968? Evidence obtained from his yearbook and one of his Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity brothers indicates that he might have. (from *NATION*, volume 247, issue 7, 26 September 1988, page 226)

Words of Wisdom from a Hypocritical, Unintellectual Nicotine-Addict

"My wife has an aversion to the Rolling Stones because she associates them with drug excesses. But I think the Stones are so damned good, I allow for them. Maybe I look the other way."

- William Bennett (from *High Times*, April 1990, page 11)



Have you ever seen him crack a smile?

What if you could take all the encyclopedias in the world, cut out the dull parts, and reconfigure them so that you had a manageable information source custom-made to fit your needs? A hypothetical (for now) cyberlibrary called **Hypertext** would let you do all this in the familiar surroundings of your home computer.

Hypertext is a non-linear information medium. The information exists in discrete units, but there is no pre-set order to the system. All the units just exist simultaneously in a random jumble until someone comes along and puts them in an order that is convenient. Imagine that a copy of the yellow pages has been cut up into its individual entries and put in a fishbowl. You might come along, needing to know where to find some electronics equipment and software. Assuming you had the patience, you could sift through all the cut-up entries until you had completed a list of all the computer dealers and Radio Shacks and the like. Then you could organize the list to fit your own personal tastes.

In a cyberspace environment, like the one envisioned by zillions of cyberpunk authors, the infosearch described above would be a hell of a lot faster and more fun. A user could plug into a Hypertext system, view all the data as fast as his brain could process it (even an unaugmented brain can process data at a surprisingly high rate, on the order of several hundred bits per second), and configure his own mini-encyclopedia for later use. Just think, all of the earth's information in one easy to access depot without the bonuses of external censorship and the cultural biases of categorizers.

Unfortunately, some agencies would probably not approve of having every bit of humanity's knowledge on open display (ah, these

h y p e r t e x t

wonderful territorial imperatives that translate into the information culture). Conceivably, such an agency could create a Hypertext, but deny access to all but its own elite Hypercorps and police the data monolith with Hypercops. So long as I'm talking about evils of extremes, a completely unregulated Hypertext could be abused by individuals. Infovandalism could spring up: pranksters falsifying records and entries for their own personal gain (Now, just a minute, who says that's an evil?).

Well, a source of free information would be sort of like a jungle-gym on a playground. Right now, the jungle-gym is dominated by the school bully. But as soon as the bully is thrown off the jungle-gym, all the other kids can play on it (Maybe that bully can be conned off with a piece of candy, or maybe it will just take a well-placed sniper's bullet from the see-saws). In any event, once the other kids get to play on it, they will have to make up some basic agreements so that all can play without excessive trouble. Humans can coexist without restrictive rules and codes of behavior, it just takes a little individual responsibility and good sense.

The purpose of the computer is to allow people to have fun. Hypertext is just an extension of this principle into the information world. Humanity has accumulated a whole mess of knowledge over the years. Hypertext is a medium through which we could all tap into that mess and carve out a chunk of it and make it our own.

(Some of the aspects of Hypertext described in this article were previously discussed by Stuart Moulthrop in "In the Zones: Hypertext and the Politics of Interpretation," "Writing on the Edge", Number 1, Fall 1989.) •

by PER PLEX

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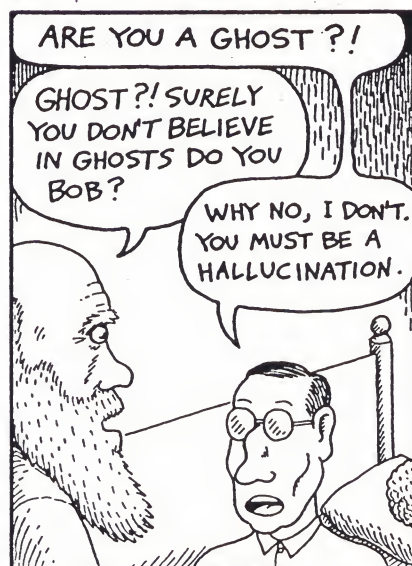
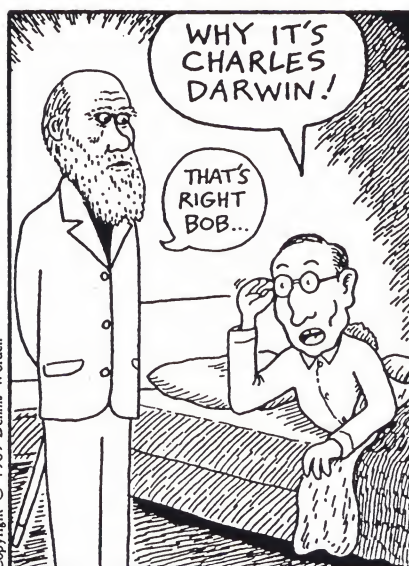
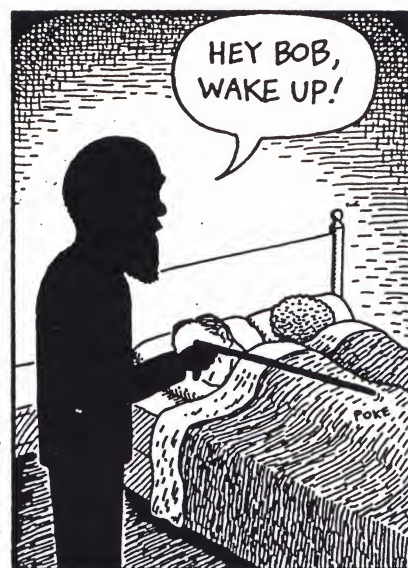
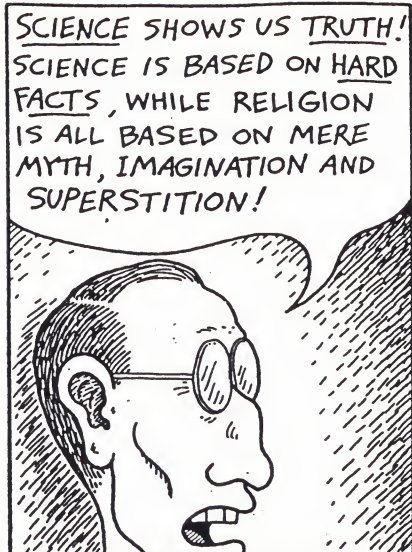
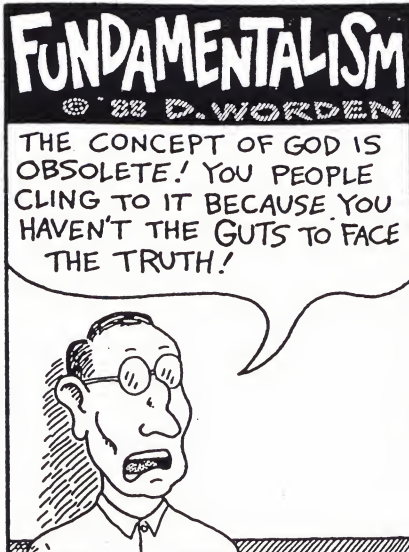
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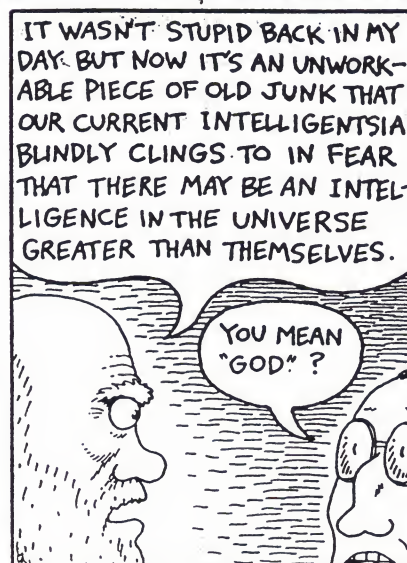
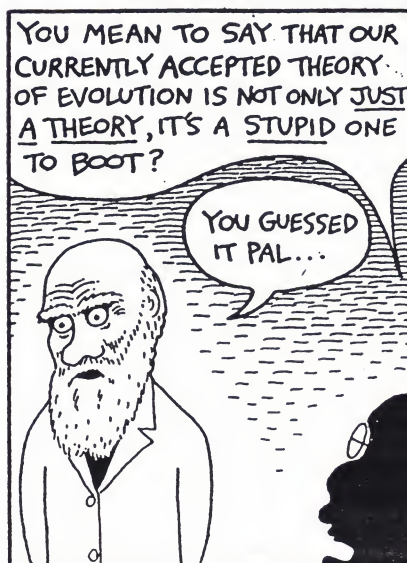
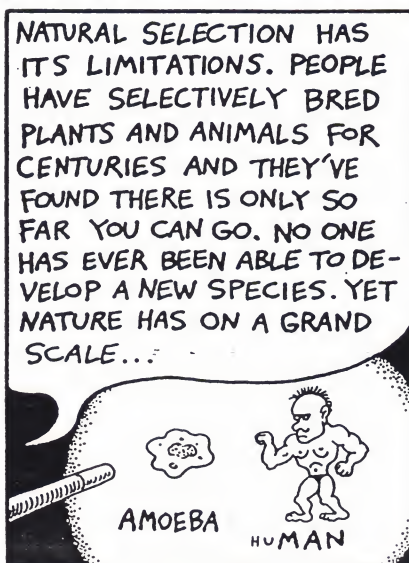
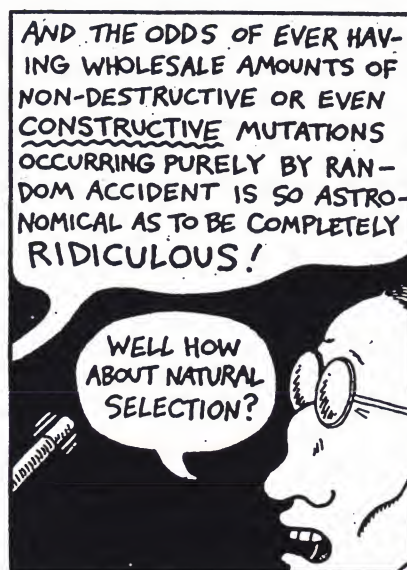
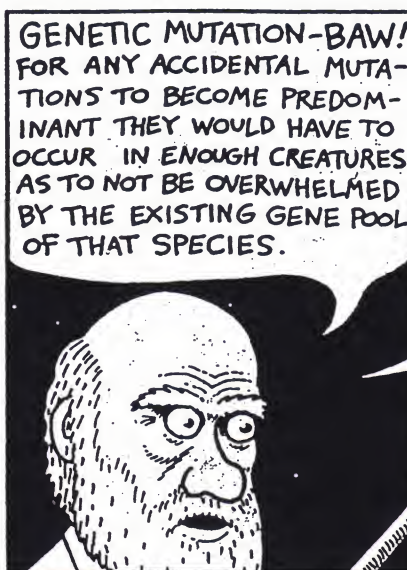
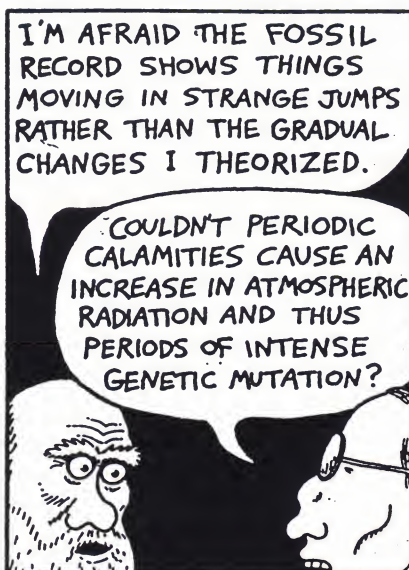
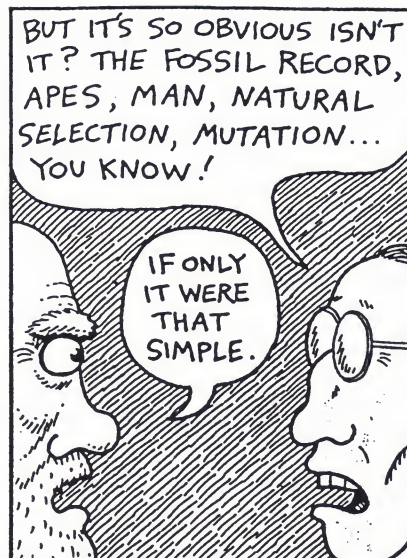
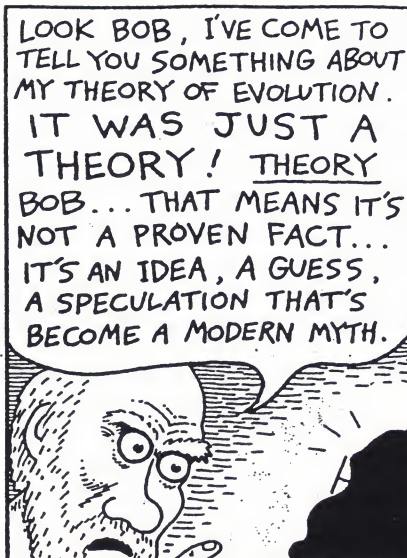
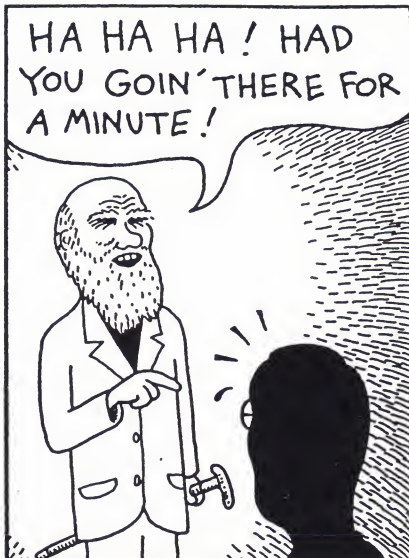
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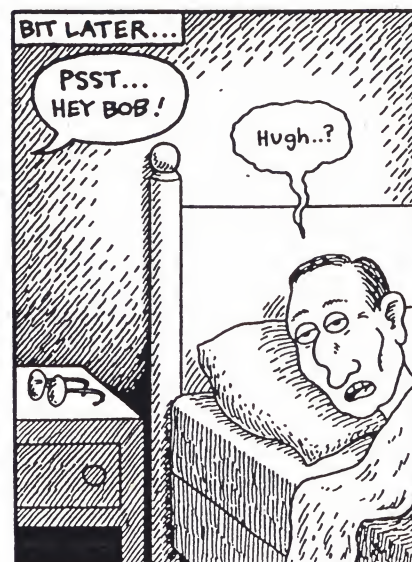
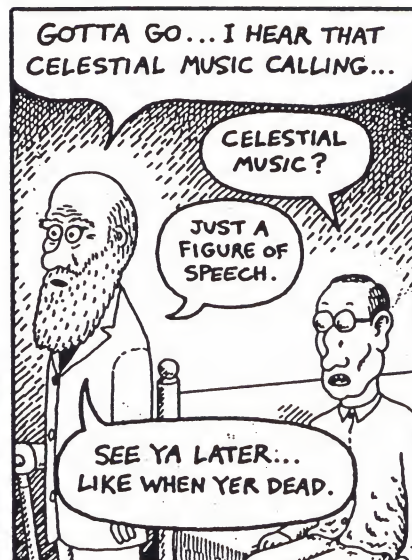
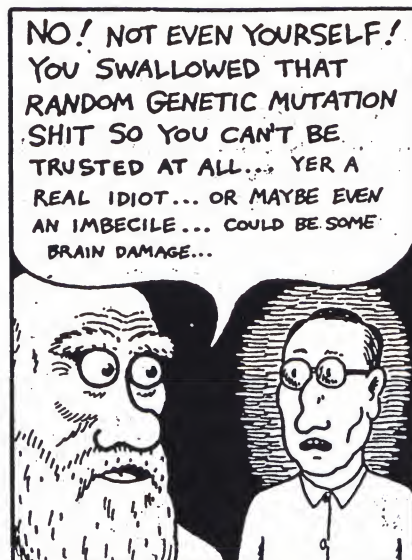
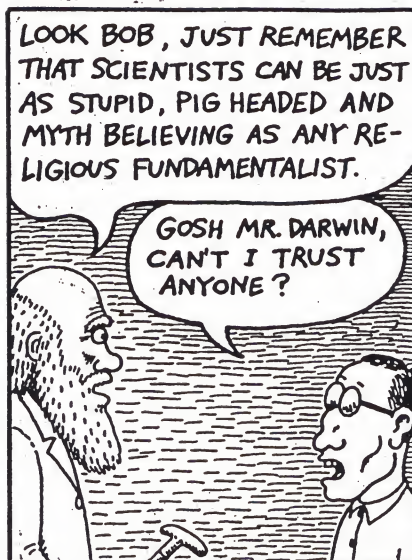
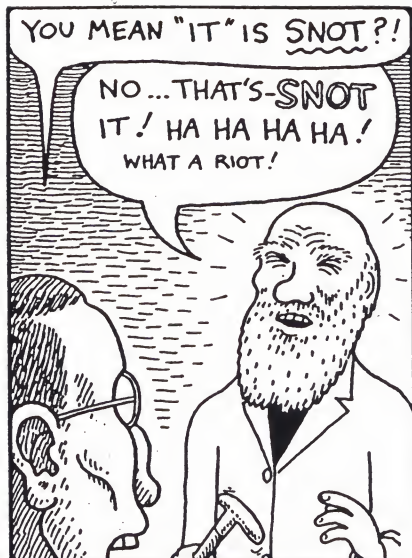
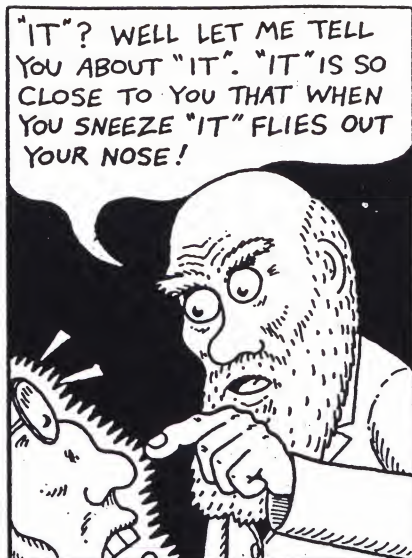
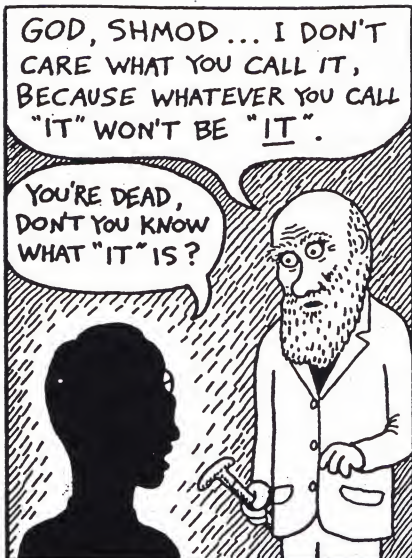
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GEE, I DUNNO,
GEORGE—
I KINDA' DIG IT!







THE MURDER OF PUNXSUTAWNEY PHIL

by KEVIN S.
KANTOLA



My last girlfriend was a miner," I said.

"You mean she was under eighteen?" she asked.

"No, she worked in the mines. She was a gold digger."

"She worked in the gold mines?"

"No, the coal mines. She just wanted me for my money."

And this was the start of a beautiful relationship between the classy bird, Patsi, and I. We met at the bar & grill. She was having a Long Island Iced Tea and I, a toasted cheese sandwich. I could tell she liked me from the start by the way goosebumps ran all up and down her shins. She was a beauty, so I kicked her tires and took her for a test drive.

"Where are we going?" she asked. She had the habit of asking questions that no one could answer.

"To the zoo," I said

"Why?"

"I want to get a close-up view of a groundhog." And then I could see by her leer that she knew I was on a case -- that I was a Private Dick.

"I know you're a Private Dick," she said.

"And how do you know that?"

"You gave yourself away at the bar & grill when you pistol-whipped the cook for burning your toasted cheese sandwich." A sharp eye this little cookie had.

We arrived at the zoo and the groundhogs were frolicking. Someone had failed to tell them that frolicking was not allowed on cold, cloudy Thursdays. The bird, Patsi, chirped at my side -- appropriate behavior at a zoo. Unfortunately I couldn't tell her that it was more a real zoo out in the real

world than it was in here -- didn't want to break her classy dame illusions.

"And what kind of case are you on?" she asked.

"Don't play dumb with me!" I shouted, pushing her back against the railing, holding a gun to her head. I had always wanted to do that with a totally unsuspecting human being, as a jest. She was a good sport, though, as she slowly unzipped my fly with the tip of her stiletto. While she was in the process of opening up this Private Dick, I knew I was outmatched and slowly backed away. "Good move," I congratulated her, my machismo sagging a bit. "Do you do that often?"

She just smiled. "And what kind of case are you on?" she asked again.

"I'm investigating the murder of



Punxsutawney Phil," I told her, point blank, no anesthetic. She didn't even flinch. I explained to Patsi how on February 2, someone had waited, with a beady little eye pressed on a scope, for Punxsutawney Phil, a nationally famous groundhog, to come out from his hole and check for his shadow. As legend has it, if he sees his shadow we shall have six more weeks of winter and if he doesn't, the end of winter will be close at hand. As it happened, it was sunny that morning. Some snakish rifleman was going to make sure that Phil never saw his shadow – probably some good-weather freak. So when Phil had come up from his hole, the assassin popped him with a 30.06 bullet right through his little groundhog heart. End of story.

"Got to take you home now, Bird," I said to Patsi. "This case might get messy."

"But I love messy," she said coyly. "Messy is my favorite style of home." Man! – this woman had class. She had a wit about her, too, but I didn't know if she could match up to my half.

"Let's go," I said.

"Where to?"

"To investigate the site of the murder." It was here that the case took on a new complexion; but I don't discriminate because of race or color. I found a dispensed shell; I also found the bullet that had passed through Phil's little groundhog heart. On the tip of the smashed bullet was pink, gooey stuff. Patsi grew anxious and irritated when I told her I thought the killer was a woman. She brushed her feelings off as PMS – but I knew better. I knew something was wrong, something she wasn't tel-

ling me. She was the kind of woman who could carry a secret around for years and her arms would never get tired. I knew I'd have to keep a personal eye on her and that was good because my other eye is my private eye and I like to distinguish between business and pleasure. This bird had me intrigued.

"Let's go," I said.

"Where now?"

"You'll see." We were going to town. At the beginning of the ride, a tall, dark cloud had hung over our heads. Patsi pulled out a cigarette. I gave her a light so she could see to get a match. At this

"No," she said, expecting that to be that. But I gave her a look that melts a woman's heart into a gush of sodium penethol.

"Well –" she hesitated. "I –" she started giving in. "Well, I was in love with Punxsutawney Phil!" she screamed.

My jaw dropped, my gun dropped, my knees dropped, and I fell into a lump on the sidewalk as she stood sobbing over me, sprinkling me with the tears from her baptismal confession. Her eyes slowed their crying. She sniffled. Then her nose began running. And so did she.

Arising and stumbling into my delayed self-composure, I ran after

"So when Phil had come up from his hole, the assassin poppd him with a 30.06 bullet right through his little groundhog heart."

point our relationship felt somewhat strained, but it got worse.

We drove. We shot the breeze. The wind died down. So did the car. I steered it into an open parking lot in town. It was twelve blocks from our destination, so we decided to pound the pavement. Afterwards we walked.

I knew I had bruised her feelings back there when I told her the killer was a woman; Patsi was probably a left wing womens'-libber at heart. But I had to knock her feelings around some more to get a straight answer.

"Gimme a straight answer!" I said, defending myself from her stiletto.

her, grabbed her by the arm. Stopped her. I said, "I never expected you for bestiality, Bird."

"No one ever does." She sniffled. She had my heart.

"Let's go solve this crime," I said. I took her under my wing and we walked. We lunched on one another with our eyes. She zipped me back up with her stiletto – better late than never.

I had a gut feeling that this case was winding down. That's the thing, though, about gut feelings – sometime's they're just indigestion.

Patsi and I visited the Punxsutawney Morgue. I told some of my

favorite old jokes, but the audience was dead. Also more forgiving. The coroner had said that he had seen to many deaths in his life and wanted to open up a flower shop. I said "Let's cut the crap. Give me the poop on Phil!"

He pulled back the sheet and showed me Phil's little groundhog face and the hole in his little groundhog chest. Along with the dried blood there was some pink goo around the hole. That got me thinking about the circularity of life.

I reflected that that's how the life cycle operates -- you're born, you learn to play, learn to fool around a bit, learn to plan, you grow gracefully into old age, then you wretch, croak, spit, and die a god-awful death.

Then I noticed Phil had on him the cutest little groundhog toe-tag you'd ever want to see -- God, he looked peaceful! Grabbing the coroner by the collar, again I shouted, "Give me the poop on Phil!"

"Well," he said rather stoically, "Phil died under rather unusual circumstances -- bizarre circumstances really."

"Well --"

"Well, he was shot through the heart with a high caliber bullet with lipstick on its tip -- Passions-Play Pink, I believe." Patsi grew as white as a ghost, but I knew that being around these dead people, one could easily get possessed, or repossessed. But her being so white made me realize something I hadn't realized before, the shade of her lipstick.

"What's your shade of lipstick, Bird?"

"Excuse me?" she said.

"You heard me." The coroner

turned an eager eye on her.

"You get your eager eye off of me," she scolded him. I took off the personal eye I had been keeping on her and turned on the private eye.

"What's your shade of lipstick, Bird?" I said louder. She turned away.

"I'm so confused," she cried, swallowing down her sobs, regretting the taste. She snorted, then pawed the floor. Then she whirled, slashing me across the face with her matching Passions-Play Pink artificial fingernails. She seethed anger.

She held me at bay with her stiletto, taunting me, mocking me. She laughed. "Ha Ha Har," she laughed. "Ha Ha Har." Her laugh was insincere. I could see her shaking in her boots and she wasn't trying to dance. Something snapped inside her. Her eyes broke water.

In one big emotional tumble she broke down and confessed, "Yes, yes I did kill Punxsutawney Phil. I killed him because he was cheating on me -- cheating on me with some little floozie mink! I put my Passions-Play pucker on the bullet, then shot him. It was the closest I could come to the 'Kiss of Death' ..."

She turned away, but just for a second, just long enough to let her churning emotions drop from her face. She turned to me, coldly. "I figured the best way to stay close to the case and direct attention away from me was to be on your arm!" She then swelled up her chest and let loose into a sobbing hysteria.

I kicked the knife in her hand, belatedly. I couldn't handle this scene and had to slap her around

a bit. I bruised more than her feelings this time. She used me. She dumped on me. The bird had given me the bird.

The case was solved and I sent Patsi off to the Big House -- the one in Washington, D.C. I had known from the beginning that there was something extra classy about this bird, but I hadn't known until the end that this bird was a bald eagle -- our country's symbol of strength and independence. The Punxsutawney police captain told me Patsi was the First Daughter.

I told the President that he had better keep a tighter leash on his daughter. He asked me to turn my back on this case in the interest of national security. I'm a Private Dick, not a political policy-maker -- so I did.

I just hope that Punxsutawney Phil, wherever he is now, had been looking down and knows now that he is avenged. I hope the bird has learned a lesson. I hope the coroner gets his flower shop. But most of all I hope that next time I won't carry my heart out on my sleeve -- it's too easy to get cuffed that way.

"Excuse me," she said, "she" being a bodacious, bareshouldered, blonde bombshell sitting next to me at the bar & grill. "Would you mind buying me a Long Island Iced Tea? I'm awfully thirsty and seem to have run out of money." And there you have it -- history repeats itself because nobody listens.

"Certainly," I said, "Would you also like to join me for a toasted cheese sandwich ..."

THE FUN PARTY MANIFESTO

by Kevin Bloom

My friends, our once great country is headed for disaster!

We spend \$300 billion a year preparing to kill people in other lands, Social Security is bankrupt and a fraud, we work from January to May solely for the benefit of the Tax man, and the list goes on and on.

This situation sucks, in my humble opinion. Things are going so bad that I'm willing to call for a Second American Revolution. Mind you, this will not be a violent revolution, like the first one. No, we've caused our own problems, and we can't blame the British this time. Also, there's really no point in shooting your neighbors, American or not.

For inspiration, Revolution II fans need only look to our Founding Fathers: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin. Not only did they invent America, they also grew dope in their backyards. What a bunch of crazed party animals! Oh, historians claim that they only made paper and rope from the stuff, but remember how ol' Ben used to fly kites during thunderstorms? Zoned to the max!

These were fun people. They thought freedom was fun, too, unless you were a slave. Fortunately, Lincoln solved that one later, by proclaiming slavery was no fun. If we read the constitution (and we should!), we find that it's written to protect people from their government. In other words, to protect fun! The American colonists were pretty darn tired of having the British barge into their houses for no good reason (sound familiar?) so they insisted that the law have "probable cause" for a search or seizure. Of course, if you own a grow-light nowadays, the police figure that's good enough! Innocent 'til proven guilty was an American idea, too.

Do we, then need a whole new Constitution? Nah!

What we so desperately need is fun. Revolutionary fun! What do Soviet citizens and the Eastern Bloc countries want from us? Fun! Levis! Bon Jovi! Rock 'n' Roll! Fast cars! Movie stars! And, of course, money with which to buy these things. The communists, you see, have discovered that having the government run the economy is no fun! They see us having fun and say, "Wowzer! I want some fun, too! Government sucks!" Suddenly, they're free! The wall comes down, and what do the Germans do? They have a monster party! Freedom = fun!

At this very moment, Congress is thinking of more ways to spend your money. How much will go for fun? None! This is a national disgrace! Fun is, or at least should be, this country's major export. We make better comedies, faster jets, and louder Rock 'n' Roll than anyone else! OK, the Brits rock, but we taught them everything they know. Also, we've adopted Monty Python.

The time has come to rid ourselves of the ancient labels "Republican" and "Democrat". Both parties have had ample time to prove themselves riddled with crooks, idiots and assorted morons. Their age has come and, one hopes, gone. A few years ago, P.J. O'Rourke wrote "Republican Party Reptile." I saw the light! Unfortunately, Mr. O'Rourke never founded a political party, or I'd have joined. Let's form our own party; a party party. Let's

call it "The Fun Party." Our political goals are simple:

1. Oppose all politicians opposed to fun;
2. Make all fun things legal unless injurious to innocent bystanders, in which case they'll be done in a safe place, away from those bystanders;
3. Abolish all compulsory non-fun activities, like registering for the draft and paying taxes.

The way I see it, this nation is divided into two groups: fun people, and people who want to keep you from having fun. I know which I like best, don't you? The nasty critters have run the show since 1911, and "the times they are a'changing!"

I'm quite serious about this! If you'll recall, the Silly Party in England has elected a member to Parliament. So can we, although what they'll do in Parliament is anyone's guess.

Over half the people in this country don't vote. Why? It's no fun! For our convention, we could get Jay Leno and the band of our choice. Even if we don't want to elect anyone, we could still have a good time. If you like the idea of a fun party, send me \$10 and I'll send you an "I'm for Fun!" bumper sticker, along with a lifetime membership and six months of *Mongo Stack*. Also, you'll get invited to lots of parties! Reptiles Unite! Together we can rock the nation! ●

YES! I believe in FUN! Enroll me in the FUN PARTY!

I understand that I will receive an I'M FOR FUN bumper sticker, a lifetime membership, and 6 months of *MONGO STACK*, the official newsletter of the FUN PARTY – all for ten bucks!

Name or pseudonym _____

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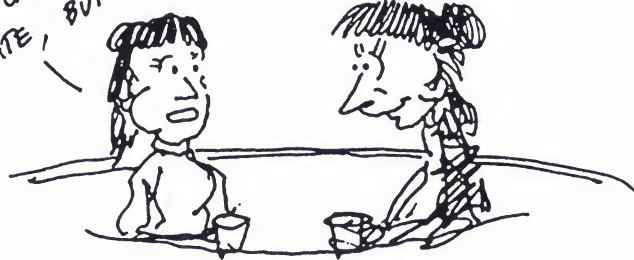
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cafe people dan kimball

THERES JUST NO WAY
I CAN LISTEN TO HIS COMPLAINING
ANYMORE ROSIE... I CAN PUT UP
WITH HIM GETTING LOADED AND
COMING HOME LATE, BUT NOT HIS COMPLAINING....

oh No.... of
course not...



DEEZ - And now his parents are saying
i'm trying to steal from him. I havent stolen
anything since I was 12 years old. Hes gonna sign
the papers tomorrow...

of course you
havent.... thats good
hes gonna sign them..



After 10 years I feel so free.... Like a great
weight has been lifted off of my shoulders.

i'm so happy for
you dear



But i'm so scared Rosie - i'm 40 years old.
Whos gonna want me now. I aint what I used to be
you know... I dont want to spend
the rest of my life alone Rosie..

dont worry dear.... you'll meet
some nice man I'm sure
of it....



DAN KIMBALL



They're trying to shut down the hunt next year," said Billy. "You heard about that?" He crumpled an empty plastic coffee cup and threw it into the rusty green oil barrel. George grunted, spit out a wad of Red Chief chewing tobacco and cleaned his mustache with the back of his hand.

They and the others in the clearing wore the clothes of hunters: plain brown boots, jeans, wide leather belts stamped with curly cue patterns inspired by leaves, large oval brass and silver belt buckles having either the letter 'J' or 'T' or engraved designs of a tractor or horse, plaid wool shirts with red or blue squares alternating with black, and, here is where hunters show their individuality, baseball caps, each logo completely different - 'Jason's Farm Supply', 'John Deere Tractors', or 'Hank's Chevron Service'.

The hunters gathered in the center of the meadow, clustering around a man waving a clipboard. They expressed their courage through immobility, hiding their feelings behind well-trimmed mustaches, beards and poker faces; speaking in low voices without moving their lips, using few words; and locking their curled fingers around the safeties on their shotguns. The smell of farts, cigarettes, after-shave and coffee blended in the cold morning air. And the

feel of adrenaline. There would always be a hunt.

"Alrighty hunters, welcome to the Club's annual boar hunt. I'll keep it short, 'cause I know you're here to hunt! God Damn! Alright! O.K. Make sure you have a clear field for 500 feet before shooting. Safeties on until you see the pig. And don't shoot anything 'til you know for sure what it is. Last year someone shot out the windows of my car." He looked at George, who looked away. "Yeah, some damn fool shot my car."

"Shit," George whispered to Billy. "Same color as a boar and parked in the bushes." He spit another wad of tobacco. It landed on Billy's foot, but he said nothing.

"We're only releasing one pig this year," said the club spokesman. Groans went up from thirty or so hunters.

"We'll make it up next year. Alright, hunt's on!"

As the hunters dispersed, they slyly watched each other to see who headed where. One pig wouldn't last long, especially since the nature preserve, the county's last, had only fifteen acres. George and Billy waited. Then they began circling around towards Bone Creek.

"See anything?" whispered George.

Billy shook his head. They crossed the almost-dry stream bed and climbed the bank into the woods. The sound of stereos and moving cars came from just beyond the trees. On this side of the stream the vegetation grew thicker; they could see only a few telephone poles through the sycamores. They heard a rustling in the black underbrush.

George yelled, turned and fired his 12 gauge Winchester just over Billy's head. The pig squealed and shot out of the shadows, running just past Billy's leg. Billy dived for cover. George twisted sideways, fell and fired again on his way down. Orange fire leaped across the dark

clearing, exploding the pig's back in a white flash. The boar, engulfed in flames, rolled on for about thirty yards, hit a tree and turned over. It's wheels clawed briefly at the air, and then stopped. George and Billy ran over, twisted their faces into ferocious scowls and watched from behind their iron gun sights as the flames died out. The pig never moved. The shotgun pellets had pierced the nylon skin in at least five places.

The club can fix it, thought George. And use it next year. That's why we pay dues.

"We got it!" yelled Billy. "You hit the battery."

Acid steamed off the rear wheels. Billy peeled off the skin from the metal chassis; then he reached into the steel frame with his German hunting knife, cut through a black wad of duct tape, and pulled out an oblong package. He tore the white butcher paper from it and proudly held the prize up to George.

"Look at that!" said Billy. "Thickest steak I ever seen!"

"They're making up for having just one pig," said George. "Wait 'til Nancy sees this!"

Acid dripped off one corner of the frozen steak. Another corner had been ripped away by a shotgun pellet.

"I haven't eaten steak for six years."

Other hunters gathered around. They offered their congratulations and tried to hide their disappointment, but the hunt was over.

"Just luck," said George. "And remember boys, there's always next year." He turned to Billy, his face flushed with excitement.

"Those eco nuts don't know what they're missing."

"Yeah," said Billy. "There ain't nothing, nothing like a good hunt." ●

Thank you to Lee Murphy

BRAIN NEWS: TOY DAY DREAMER

a bOING-bOING exclusive interview

Phosphenes are luminous impressions generated from excitation of the retina. By sitting in front of a blinking strobe light (flashing between 8 and 25 times per second, usually) with your eyes closed, you'll see phosphenes; colorful twisting grid-like patterns and vibrating geometric shapes.

The Kaleido-sky (now called the Day Dreamer) is a phosphene-inducing device shaped like a diver's mask with a small tube which fits into your mouth. Two holes in the front of the mask permit sunlight to hit your closed eyes. Air blown through the tube causes a disk with two holes in it to spin around. Instead of using electricity to create stroboscopic phosphene-based hallucinations, the Kaleido-Sky lets you use the sun and your own lung power to obtain swirling, radiating mosaics of light. Last year I saw a Kaleido-Sky in a store in Boulder and bought it.

I brought my Kaleido-Sky to the local park on an appropriately sunny day. Lying down in the grass, I put the mask on and slowly exhaled into the little tube. The Kaleido-Sky made a pleasant insectoid buzz as the rotating shutter spun around, opening and blocking the path between the sun and my closed eyes. As it came up to speed, a grid of colors wobbled and rotated slowly in front of me. As I

continued using it, the toy brought tighter, more colorful patterns. It's easy to get lost with this thing and forget where you are while you're using it. One of the best things about the toy is right after you take it away from your face and look around — reality looks funny.

I was planning on writing a quick review of the Day Dreamer, until I bumped into Kelly Green demonstrating his toy downtown. I told him that I was the powerful magnate of the bOING-bOING publishing empire, and he graciously consented to an interview.

BB: *Where did you grow up?*

KG: *I was raised in a very small West Texas town. My family owns a restaurant there. I have a very entrepreneurial family. I busbed tables from the time I was six. I left home thirty days after graduating from high school hating the restaurant business, knowing that someday I would work for myself. I lived in Aspen for twelve years. Moving there at eighteen, I thought*



Kelly Green demonstrates his brain toy.

I knew everything there was and being from the restaurant business, I thought I'd wait tables. Little did I know, the drinking age in Colorado was twenty-one, so I couldn't serve liquor, so I couldn't wait tables. So I was a bellman for a year-and-a-half, I was a busboy at a couple of different restaurants, I've been a front desk clerk, I've cleaned carpets, I've washed windows. My biggest job over the last seven years was as a ski photographer, taking pictures of families and selling the pictures to them at the bottom. I delivered pizzas for five years.

BB: *How did you come up with the idea for the toy?*

KG: *I'm not the inventor of the toy. I was sitting on a houseboat on Lake Powell. I*

was twenty-nine years old, I'd lived in Aspen for twelve years. I always had three roommates; people that didn't pay their phone bill, didn't pay the electricity bill; I was the guy who always put up the deposit. I was the only responsible one. I got stuck with a lot of bills. I thought, "I'm twenty-nine, I'm never going to have a wife and a house and a white picket fence."

Just before you turn thirty, you assess your life and ask yourself: "Where am I? Why am I not where I thought I'd be when I was twenty?" I was a ski bum and when I got off that houseboat I was going to go back to Aspen and be a ski bum again.

Then this girl walked up to the top part of the houseboat (I was dosing on shrooms) and said "Here Kelly, you'll like this," and put one of these toys in my hands. I put the toy on and played with it for about three minutes; she was guiding me through it. And by that time, fifteen out of the seventeen people on board were standing around me, all on shrooms. I took the toy off and said: "This thing has got to be illegal."

For the next four days, seventeen people argued over whose turn it was to use the toy. She didn't know what it was called, she didn't have the brochure, she had bought it four or five years prior to that at some little book store in Topanga Canyon. I was at a real loss. All I had was the patent number. So I wrote it down on a little piece of paper and tucked it away. and I also wrote "The LSD mask" because we didn't know what to call it. I knew that I wanted to sell these toys for a living. I truly believe it was divinely put in my hands four years ago at this houseboat party. It was my duty to bring visualization and wonderment to the Joe Blow common guy who's caught up in this crap-ass world that we live in of government-run "We want you to go to high school and college and marry somebody, get 2.8 kids, a house in suburbia America, a cat and a dog, and two cars and a VCR, and get 250,000 dollars in debt and be scared to

death not to get up and go to work." In that drone-like world, I want to inspire wonderment with the toy. I want somebody to ponder, "How does this toy work?" and "I can see with my eyes closed!" Instead of "What color should my next car be and what kind of TV should I buy and is it on sale at McDuff's this weekend?."

I tucked the little piece of paper away. I had visions of grandeur while at Lake Powell of living in Hawaii selling them on the beach, and all over the world, and it was going to happen in six months. So I set it aside, thinking "This is too easy to do." I went back to Aspen and packed up my bags and said "I'm not going to spend another winter in Aspen; I'm going to go to Phoenix and take ten strokes off my golf game." I moved to Phoenix and took ten strokes off my golf game.

When the spring came and it was getting to be 104 degrees, I was packing my bags and I came across the little piece of paper that said "LSD Mask" and had the patent number on it. I knew how to write to the patent office. You send them a buck and a half with the number and they send you the plans. So in essence I started the business out with \$1.50.

When I got back to Aspen the plans were waiting in my PO box. I began the search for the inventor, who, by the way, lived in Boulder when he invented it. He lives in California now. It took me about three months to run the inventor down. All I wanted to do was sell the toy. I thought that they were still on the market. It turns out the toy had been off the market for about four or five years. He had made a couple thousand of them and sold them at Dead shows and a few bookstores here and there. He had lost interest in it. He said the mold had been destroyed by accident. I asked what it would take for me to put it back on the market. He said I'd have to get another mold made up, which costs between ten and twelve thousand dollars. And then there's brochures, marketing and advertising. It took me six

months to write a business plan and another six months to get financing.

My business plan called for \$100,000; I could have gotten by with \$70,000. I went to borrow the \$70,000 and I got \$35,000. So I got half of what I truly needed. And I'd been living off the skin of my teeth which brings us to this point, and it could very well not be in production in another two months. I have two hundred toys left in stock and I'm trying to make a decision whether to borrow more money or not.

I've decided to change the name of the Kaleido-Sky to the Day Dreamer. The main reason is that I'm having very poor product name recognition. People say "I'll get that purple thing," or "get that kaleido-scope thing." Plus Kaleido-Sky has too many syllables; very harsh syllables. It looks like a Polish word. People pronounce it the Kaleedio-sky, Kiyodolosky. So now when people see me with it, they ask what I'm doing and I tell them I'm Day Dreaming, and this is the Day Dreamer. You use it during the day and it produces a dream-like effect.

BB: How does the Day Dreamer work?

KG: In my opinion, this is the way the toy

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works: The eyelids are closed, you blow into the tube, which causes the inner disks to rotate. The rotation regulates the flickering effect of the sun's full color spectrum across the user's closed eyelids. Within the eye you have what are called rods and cones. Rods depict black and white and depth of field. Cones depict color. On the cones you have color receptors, they sense the six colors of the chakras which equal white light.

As you play with the toy moving from left to right, the colors and patterns change, the light that comes through the eyelids stimulate the cones in the eye. They in turn send an electrical signal down the optic nerve to the visual cortex section of the brain, the part that says: See red! See blue! See orange! See green! See indigo! See Violet! The brain is receiving these signals eight to twelve times per second based on the rotation of the spinning disk. We have been taught that when you close your eyes you can't see. Yet we dream. In the first 15 or twenty seconds of playing with the toy it seems pretty bland: black, white, gray. The brain is getting these signals to see color, but it fights it, saying, "Oh no. I have my eyes closed, I'm in the beta brain wave frequency, I'm not supposed to see any color. But the synapses keep firing, saying "Color, color, color! Red orange blue green! And finally the brain says: "Ok, ok override, let's put these signals on the mental screen."

About synaptic firing: Let's say the inside of your nose itches. A sense nerve there goes up inside of your brain and says: "Inside of the nose itches" and it's looking for a neuron to solve the answer to the problem of the inside of the nose itching. It may get a neuron that says: "wiggle your elbow" or "scratch your head" or "light a cigarette" or "make some iced tea". But then it hits a neuron that says: "Pull back three fingers stick one up your nose and scratch." Once it finds an answer through searching, it builds a synaptic circuit. What the toy is doing, it's causing synaptic firing, charges of light

and dark into the brain, and they aren't there for any real reason. You're not thinking, you're here playing with a toy. The theory is that it enhances synaptic connections in the brain, and that's the key to Intelligence.

BB: Have you experimented with this while getting an EEG or while hooked up to a biofeedback machine to test what kind of brainwave patterns are produced?

KG: Yes, the previous patent holder did those kinds of tests. And every neurologist, psychologist and biofeedback person I've talked to says that photic stimulation between 8 and 12 cycles per second will cause the user's brain to go into an alpha state. After three minutes of using the Day Dreamer and keeping it at 8 to 12 cycles per second, it will induce an alpha state. Of course, when you're using the Day Dreamer, you don't know how fast it's spinning, so you have to experiment, and not hyper-ventilate with the thing, which is what a lot of people tend to do. You don't need to. If you blow and let it glide, it will do it's thing. Americans are notorious shallow breathers. They take half breaths. After using the Day Dreamer for a while, you'll learn to breath at a rate which keeps it spinning from 8 to 12 cycles per second.

BB: What about spinning the Day Dreamer at 0.5 to 4 cycles per second to get into the delta state?

KG: I have a very strong objection to that statement because I don't believe that there is any type of consciousness at all in the delta state. The beauty of the toy and other brain machines, is that they give you a sub-conscious state of awareness in a conscious state of mind. And I don't think you can hold onto or maintain any kind of consciousness and awareness of the physical world if you're in the delta state.

BB: So in the delta state you're saying that you fall asleep?

KG: Yes, and I've actually had people fall asleep while playing with the toy.

BB: Tell me more about the images

induced with the Day Dreamer.

KG: The images are displayed on something other than just a flat screen. It gets three dimensional because the light is also exciting the rods in the eye, which depict black, white and depth of field. If you start concentrating when you see the patterns, instead of seeing a flat field of patterns, you'll notice that some colors are further back, and you'll get a depth of field effect. The colors are best when you look to the side of the sun. While playing with the toy, if you cross your eyes (so they'd be looking at the tip of your nose if they were open) you'll find a center point, an apex where all these things are coming out at you. And when you find that point, in your mind push it away by 30 feet. Say "Get back." If you can't push it away, just back away from it. You'll find yourself in this three-dimensional tunnel, where you are going whoosh! down this tube, and the colors are flying past you. Sometimes it's a box, sometimes it's a tube.

Then you can begin to curve this tunnel. It's hard to keep it up for long because you'll relax your eyes. But while you're doing it you can will a certain color to appear at the end of the tunnel. You're flying down this tunnel at 3000 miles per hour. The first few times you use the toy, you're just passively playing with it. But then you get to learn how to use it and you can begin to control and create the patterns that appear. You can ask for stars, and ask for rectangles.

BB: What do you see for the future of brain toys?

KG: We exercised our rights in the Sixties and Seventies, our bodies in the Eighties, and we're going to exercise our minds and imaginations in the Nineties. ●

GOOD CLEAN FUN COMICS

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The blue Lincoln Continental pulled into the narrow cobblestone driveway. Phillip Koton adjusted his chintzy tie and inspected his teeth in the rear view mirror. He found a poppyseed lodged between his two front teeth and sucked in hard until it unhooked itself. He then chuckled; after today he would never have to worry about money again.

Phillip walked with confidence and self-assurance up to the pink Mediterranean style mansion. He knew Mr. Finchly, his boss's boss, wouldn't object to his proposal. After all, who else as attractive and witty as Phillip would ever even engage in a conversation with Finchly's homely, humorless daughter? He would save Petunia from becoming a spindly old maid.

He rang the doorbell and then quickly spit his chewing gum into some rosebushes. He hoped only Mr. Finchly would be home; he didn't want to ruin the beautiful day he had spent with Sandra, his gorgeous secretary, by having to stomach Petunia.

Petunia answered the door. She looked at the floor and smiled, revealing a protrud-

ing set of yellow teeth.

"May I come in Petunia?"

With her eyes still glued to the floor she nodded her pea-sized head and stepped aside to let him in.

Phillip started having second thoughts. Was all this really worth a couple hundred million in stock? Of course it was. Maybe he could even get rid of her in a couple of years and still keep the fortune. And besides, he'd always have Sandra.

"Uh, is your father home?"

At that moment Mr. Finchly appeared at the top of the stairway. "Why hello Phillip. What brings you around here?"

Mr. Finchly was actually an intelligent and interesting man, and Phillip enjoyed his conversation.

"Well I came here to talk to you about something very important."

"I'll be right down, young man. Petunia, why don't you get Phillip something to drink?"

Petunia shuffled out. Phillip looked around hungrily at all of the lavish ornaments that filled the room: the massive chandelier that hung over the gold engraved dining table; the solid gold candlesticks that complimented the heavy oak mantelpiece; the handmade Turkish rug that lay between the red velvet couches; and some original 18th century paintings, from artists whose names always slipped Phillip's mind. He then noticed something he had never seen before: a shiny gold bird cage hanging from the ceiling with a single lovebird inside. He walked over to it and stuck his finger through the thin bars. The bird immediately lunged toward him and snapped at his finger, drawing blood.

"Ouch! God damn you!"

Petunia then came in with two glasses of milk in her hands and fear in her eyes.

"This stupid bird just bit me."

"Well you deserved it, fathead."

For a split second Phillip was surprised that Petunia would ever dare to say such a thing to him. But then his heart nearly ripped through his chest when he realized that the voice he had heard wasn't the soft spoken stutter of Petunia, but a low raspy sound that had come from the direction of the bird cage. He spun around and stared at the red and green creature.

"Where did that come from?" He turned toward Petunia. She just stared at him with a blank expression. He then looked back at the bird. The two black dots on its face stared directly into Phillip's eyes. He wished Mr. Finchly would hurry.

Petunia handed her fiance-to-be a glass of milk. It was warm and had fingerprints around the rim of the glass. Phillip felt nauseous. His legs were weak and he looked for something on which to sit down. He put his milk down on the marble coffee table and fell onto one of the red velvet couches. He picked up a Wall Street Journal and tried to read.

Petunia came over and sat next to him. Her body was skinny and her skin had a greenish tint. She was wearing a strong perfume that hurt Phillip's nostrils with every breath. He casually scooted away from her.

"Give her a kiss," the voice from the bird cage sounded again.

The insides of Phillip's stomach felt like they were being twisted with a pair of pliers, and his knees were now shaking. He slowly turned to face the miserable bird.

"Whatchya starin' at, ya greedy hog. If ya wanna marry her, why don't'cha kiss her?" The bird's beak wasn't actually moving, it was just slightly ajar. The two evil black dots on its face were still staring at Phillip.

Phillip began to panic. "What the hell is going on here? Is this some kind of joke? Where is your father?"

Petunia slid over to get closer to Phillip,

and he noticed a film of milk covering her upper lip. She moved her face right up to Phillip's, offering him a chance to kiss her. Her breath was sour. Phillip bolted up from the couch. A guttural guffaw shook the bird cage.

"So you can't go through with it, eh? And you expect to marry her!"

"Shut up, would you?" Phillip screamed.

Another guttural guffaw.

"I said shut up!"

"Does your face always get that distorted look when you're angry?" the voice said, with a mocking calmness.

Phillip snapped. He went over to the cage and started to shake it violently. "I said shut up!" He repeated this many times as he continued to shake the cage.

Mr. Finchly heard the commotion and quickly ran down the stairs to see Phillip. In a rage, almost yanking the cage right from the ceiling. The little bird inside was screaming for its life. Petunia was hunched over the couch, reading the comics from the paper.

"What in God's name are you doing? Have you gone mad?"

Phillip jumped and let go of the cage at the sound of Mr. Finchly's voice. He slowly regained his composure and stood at Mr.

Finchly's attention. He was still nauseous.

"I, uh, I'm sorry sir. But this bird was talking to me."

"Well of course Phillip. All birds talk. That's the beauty of nature. There is no sound more harmonious to my ears than the sound of birds chirping in the morning."

"No sir, I mean it was TALKING."

"What are you trying to tell me?"

Phillip felt one eyelid begin to twitch. It was uncontrollable and very uncomfortable.

Mr. Finchly went over to the bar and poured himself a shot of whiskey while he started to question Phillip's mental stability. While he was pontificating on how his empire was started with a sharp mind and quick wit, Phillip heard the voice whisper, "You sure are ugly."

Phillip became an animal and lunged toward the cage. He screamed "Shut the fuck up!" as he jerked the bird cage right out of the ceiling. He held the cage over his head and threw it as hard as he could. It flew across the room and smashed through a window that overlooked a tulip garden. Besides a few dents, the cage and the bird were both fine.

Mr. Finchly stared at Phillip with disbelief.

The room was silent for a few moments. Finally Mr. Finchly spoke up.

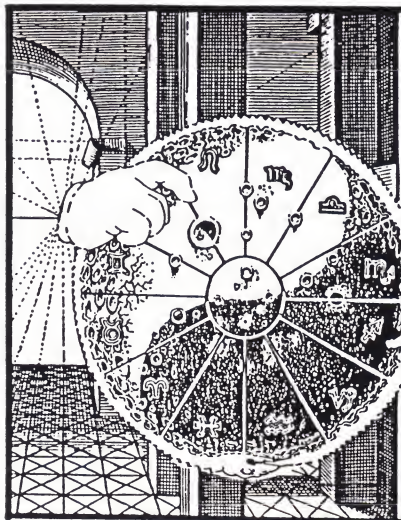
"Phillip, I understand that the project your team has been working on may have caused you much stress, and I realize that you have been putting in more than 40 hours lately, but I find this kind of behavior inexcusable."

Phillip's twitch was working at full speed now.

"I think what you need is a long vacation. I will see to it tomorrow that you get a 6-month leave of absence, sans pay. Now, I believe it is time for you leave the premises."

Phillip could hear the bird chirping outside of the broken window. He hung his head low and headed for the front door. Petunia slurped the last bit of her milk down and turned the page of the newspaper.

He started to walk toward his Lincoln, but then something made him walk around to the side of the house. He had to have one last look at the lousy creature who had cost him not only his fortune, but his job as well. Now Sandra would never have him. He peeked around the corner and spotted the gold cage on its side, glistening in the sun. The bird was sleeping. He thought he heard it snore. He shook his head and turned to leave. He then heard one last guttural guffaw. ●



ASTROLOGIK

by ANTERO ALLI

Preface by Steven Forrest

"If you're new to celestial symbolism, you're fortunate to be starting with ASTROLOGIK; you'll be learning 21st Century astrology. If you've been consorting with the cosmic muse for years, get ready to lose your virginity all over again; this guy will rattle you!" STEVEN FORREST, author of Inner Sky

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EXCITING

After 45 years of making obscene phone calls to tens of thousands of housewives in Long Island, Harry "Rubber Ducky" Sternkriptz is throwing in the towel.

"It just ain't the some anymores," says Sternkriptz of the joys of talking dirty to priggish matrons over the telephone. "It's a dying art and I feel too lonesome to go on with it. These young fellers are all calling 900 numbers and paying to do what used to be free. Besides, 'taint as thrilling when the person on the other end of the phone ain't shocked and offended. It's too dadgum sad to think about," he told reporters at a recent press conference, eyes glistening with tears.

Harry's decision to retire has created a national interest in the rapidly disappearing craft of obscene phone calling. President Bush has allocated half a million dollars to the Library of Congress, which will use the funds to record profane calls of the few remaining practicing masters.

A ticker tape parade has been scheduled in downtown Manhattan next week to congratulate Strenkriptz on a half decade of obscene telephone harassment. Wall Street will close at noon to observe the occasion.

News

The National Wrench Company of Akron, Ohio recently awarded fifteen million dollars to Melvin Cravendork in a lawsuit stemming from a self-inflicted facial mutilation caused by a crescent wrench made by National. Cravendork had been watching an animated Three Stooges cartoon in which Moe had twisted Shemp's nose over 360 degrees with a pair of pliers. "I was excited to try the humorous stunt on myself," said Cravendork, a professor of economics at George Washington University, "So I grabbed what I thought was a pair of pliers and twisted my proboscis right off my face!"

The crescent wrench made National Wrench does come with a 300-page safety booklet attached by chain to a hole on its handle which states that it is in fact a wrench and as such should not be used to twist ones nose off. However, Cravendork had previously removed the safety booklet with a pair of bolt cutters and claims that the chain should have been strong enough to prevent him from doing so. Besides, says Cravendork's lawyer, William Gleesnort, who first learned about the incident while hanging out at the local

hospital emergency room for no apparent reason, the booklet did not say what the tool wasn't. "Just stating that it is a wrench is not enough. What if somebody thinks it is both a wrench and a station wagon and tries to take their kids to the zoo in it? Now that would be some lawsuit! The irresponsible manufacturers of this potentially lethal wrench can only be persuaded in one way from further harming innocent people: by hitting them in the pocketbook."

National Wrench is now attaching a personal computer complete with a filled 650 Megabyte compact disk ROM with more inclusive safety instructions to each tool it sells. The new wrench retails for twelve thousand dollars. ●

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